

**PRAGMATIC RHETORIC AND THE ART OF PHILOSOPHY**

Timothy Hildreth Engström

Ph. D., Philosophy,  
University of Edinburgh,  
1987.



## ABSTRACT OF THESIS:

The question posed is this: In the wake of the "deconstruction" of Continental Philosophy (from Nietzsche and Heidegger to Derrida and Foucault) and the "pragmatization" of Anglo-American Philosophy (from James and Dewey to Rorty), what sort of genre of writing is Philosophy? A selective history is narrated to illustrate the alliances between sophism and traditional rhetoric (from Gorgias and Protagoras through Cicero and Quintilian); between rhetoric and classical American pragmatism (Peirce, James and Dewey); between contemporary pragmatism (Rorty) and contemporary continental philosophy (Derrida); and between contemporary literary criticism (Fish) and "post-modern" aesthetics. It is proposed that these alliances form a coherent narrative which exemplifies a form of rapprochement in the aestheticization of philosophy's own discourses and texts. It is argued that the consequence of this shift, from reading philosophy as foundational for the other inquiries culture institutes to reading it as rhetoric, is to see the genre of philosophy as an art, as a set of texts which contributes to the plurality of relativistic discourses which we construct for particular critical purposes: constructed not as mirrors of Truth, but as useful and persuasive social dramas.



**DECLARATION:**

In accordance with REGULATION 2.4.15, I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by me and is my own work.

# PRAGMATIC RHETORIC AND THE ART OF PHILOSOPHY

## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

1.1 INTRODUCTION: .....	1
1.2 WRITING TEXTS: .....	4
1.3 THE HISTORICAL SETUP: .....	13
2.1 THE PERSISTENCE OF THE RHETORICAL: .....	36
2.2 "PRIMARY" RHETORIC: .....	37
2.3 LITERARY RHETORIC: .....	48
2.4 RHETORIC AND THE RISE OF THE "MODERN:" .....	63
3.1 PHILOSOPHY AND PRAGMATIC WRITING: .....	75
3.2 EARLY TENSIONS OF PRAGMATIC WRITING: .....	89
3.3 PEIRCE, THE UNEASY RHETORICIAN: .....	94
3.4 ROYCE, JAMES, AND UNSTABLE GENRES: .....	108
3.5 GENRES WHICH STABILIZE: WRITING ON SOCIETY: .....	122
4.1 SPARRING WITH LITERATURE AND STRUCTURAL ARTIFACTS: ..	129
4.2 CULTURE, NATURE AND ART: .....	134
4.3 THE RHETORIC OF THE STRUCTURALIST TEXT: .....	142
4.4 LÉVI-STRAUSS READING AND WRITING STRUCTURES: .....	146
4.5 JAKOBSON, AND REFERRING TO FICTIONS: .....	152
4.6 STRUCTURALIST CONSEQUENCES: .....	162

5.1 PHILOSOPHY WITHOUT PRINCIPLES: WRITING CRITICAL TEXTS: .. 172

5.2 PRODUCING TEXTS RATHER THAN DISCOVERING TAXONOMIES: ..... 177

5.3 AESTHETICIZED TEXTS AND PRAGMATIC READERS: ..... 185

5.4 PARADIGMS LOST, AND CONTINUED ARTISTIC USAGE: ..... 195

5.5 FOUR THEMATIC EXTRAPOLATIONS: ..... 200

5.6 PARADIGMS LOST, AND ARTISTIC USAGE -- REMINDER: ..... 207

5.7 QUIBBLES ABOUT OUR FAMILY RESEMBLANCE: ..... 213

  

6.1 A POST-MODERN RHETORIC: ..... 230

6.2 POST-MODERN THEMES: ..... 235

6.3 POST-MODERN TEXTS: ..... 240

6.4 INTERPRETING THE MODERN SCORE: ..... 244

6.5 INTERPRETING POST-MODERN SCORES: ..... 260

6.6 A DEFENCE OF "TRUTH" OR A DEFENCE OF GENRE?: ..... 265

6.7 A POST-MODERN GENRE WITHOUT TRUTH: ..... 272

6.8 IN-CONCLUSIVE: CAUGHT IN THE ART OF PHILOSOPHIZING: ..... 289

  

7.1 BIBLIOGRAPHY: ..... 294

## PRAGMATIC RHETORIC AND THE ART OF PHILOSOPHY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION:

The question posed is this: In the wake of the "deconstruction" of Continental Philosophy (from Nietzsche and Heidegger to Derrida and Foucault) and the "pragmatization" of Anglo-American Philosophy (from James and Dewey to Rorty -- among, of course, others), what sort of genre of writing is Philosophy? A selective history will be narrated to illustrate the alliances between traditional rhetoric and contemporary pragmatism; between pragmatism and contemporary continental philosophy; between contemporary literary criticism and "post-modern" aesthetics, in order to exemplify a form of rapprochement in the aestheticization of Philosophy's own discourses and texts. Also posed will be the question of the consequences of this shift from reading Philosophy as foundational for the other inquiries culture institutes to reading it as an art which contributes to the plurality of relativistic but interrelated discourses which we construct for particular critical purposes.

Firstly: The strategy offered will propose that the way we test philosophical texts is to assess them not in terms of their correspondence to something external to themselves (Truth), but to assess them through internalist comparison, testing them in

rhetorical and pragmatic ways, reading them in ways which ask them to dramatize their usefulness in terms of the power of the stories they tell, and relative to the epistemological allegories which support and structure those stories. Theories are, as James put it, "instruments, not answers..." The critical question thereby becoming not only: "what can the instrument do?," but in a stylistically reflexive way: "how is the instrument put together?." In other words, the question will be framed within a literary theoretical and pragmatic corpus of criticism; both of which presently show an enormous amount of convergence in attempting to sustain, theoretically and practically, the foregrounding of an interest in the construction of texts rather than the discovery of Truth, testing them not as if "the mirror of nature" (Rorty: 1980) but as useful and persuasive metaphors, as *rhetoric*.

Secondly: Philosophy, when read as rhetoric, as art, raises the question not only of what sort of art philosophy is, but also the question of how philosophers talk *about* and *use* art (write aesthetics). That is, it poses the question of how aesthetics functions as a way to establish (often covertly) a philosophical discourse as an important arbiter in our understanding of the world and of the arts -- usually considered as *second* order "representations" of the world. In other words, the genre of "aesthetics" will be considered as a function of how philosophers understand *themselves* in contradistinction to the arts -- especially literature.

Chronologically, though, the debate can be most productively located nearer its original offspring, in the conflict between rhetoric and Dialectic, between, for example, Gorgias and Plato. Only after this historical conflict between the pragmatics of civilian rhetoric and the foundation-seeking of Dialectics has been presented (in chapter 2) will it be productive and possible to present a streamlined version of the contributions of classical and contemporary pragmatism and contemporary literary criticism-theory as they bear on the issues of the aestheticization of philosophy and the question of genre (in chapters 3, 4 and following). (Although the reading offered of the classical background will already play back into the historical narrative the voice of Dewey (and to some extent, Derrida) as a strategy for ordering the debate and its consequences for what follows.) As Protagoras always asked to hear two sides to every story, or indeed two stories, the philosopher is advised to be able to tell more than one story about himself. He is no longer, like a 19<sup>th</sup>-century novelist (or Philosopher), an omniscient narrator of one single plot, with an obvious beginning and end; nor does he operate within *one* stabilized style (aesthetic) of writing (like a philosophical artisan mimetically reproducing givens provided by the tradition). In other words, the suggestion (and analogy) will be that pragmatic and post-modern philosophers, like their artistic contemporaries, rewrite (narrate) their traditions to suit the present purposes of an *essenceless* and changing genre.

## 1.2 WRITING TEXTS:

First, a directional quotation:

"Plato's generation would, I think, have found it difficult to class Plato. Was he an inept visionary or a subtle dialectician? A political reformer or a founder of the new type of literary art? Was he a moral exhorter, or an instructor in an Academy? Was he a theorist upon education, or the inventor of a method of knowledge? We, looking at Plato through the centuries of exposition and interpretation, find no difficulty in placing Plato as a philosopher and in attributing to him a system of thought. We dispute about the nature and content of this system, but we do not doubt it is there. It is the intervening centuries which have furnished Plato with his technique and which have developed and wrought Plato to a system."<sup>1</sup>

Dewey wrote this about our reception of Plato while talking about Emerson, whom he considered to be a 19<sup>th</sup>-century example of a thinker/poet who constructively blurred the sorts of distinctions Dewey himself mentions, and which philosophers tend to construct to explain what it is they do. And by way of introduction it helps open up and yet organize some of the parameters of our question: What is it that makes us consider philosophy as a distinctive literary genre?; how did (does) the pragmatic tradition understand this question?; and, a third strategy I wish to sketch: how does the analogy with the literary, the rhetorical and aesthetic help clarify what one might consider to be this peculiar type of writing?

---

<sup>1</sup> Dewey, 1903 (cited in J. Ratner, 1957.)



I want to offer, firstly, as a descriptive device, for interpretational convenience, an assessment of this classical and contemporary opposition between writing literature and writing philosophy, a view of its persistence, and, hence, a view of what Philosophy (even so-called *Philosophy of Art*, or Aesthetics) is. I propose to do this under the general and not yet very explanatory rubric: "Philosophy and/as/of Literature" (Danto, 1985: More on Danto's rhetoric in chapter 6.). The opposition, duality, or perhaps paradox I have in mind is Philosophy's search, on the one hand, to find the given, the true, the real, and distinguish these from the made, the constructed, fictitious and/or false. The search is to find the ground or foundation of things behind our language, or languages or other cultural artifices, which our most trusted and refined *Philosophical* languages better mirror, or accurately represent or, even more hopefully, to which they correspond. The opposition, then, is between the given and the media we use (language, sight, touch) to get at the given. The structure of philosophy is, or has been most often, then, the setting up of this oppositional tension, and then the attempt to overcome it.

Perhaps we (that is, the true Philosopher) might overcome it by a trip to 5<sup>th</sup>-century Athens, that is, by Platonic ascension to a third meta-point (to the Forms) mystically uninfected by mere opinion and the imperfect copies of language. Another strategy might be to posit an introspective/intuitionist technique by which we, in 17<sup>th</sup>-century France, *reflect* our way behind the opposition -- the oppositional distinction between needing either absolute certainty



or fearing skepticism (this, with a little help from the still-neoplatonic Descartes). With a little Kantian ingenuity we might, in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Prussia, see things in terms of a different set of fundamentally unbridgable gaps; in effect, we might see the world in opposition, or contrast, to our ways of construing it, in contrast to our categories of rationality and understanding; that is, by opposing things in themselves to their appearance in, or construction by, thought, (by opposing noumena to phenomena). Or we might, in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Vienna, return to objects in the search for constraints that language can't avoid when it wants to say something sensible. What all of these pictures postulate, as consolation for the difficulty of holding onto the Truth, is the rational philosophical Subject as purveyor of the ontological structure of the world, of thought, and of the language in which the dilemma is dramatized. The production of, and "need" for, the "professional philosopher" is the consequence of such dualisms.

These little prolegomenal caricatures are simply attempts to begin to fill in a picture of Philosophy as that form of intellectual work where big stories have been told about big fundamental gaps, gaps between our worldly investigative strategies and the Truth, between the way we have been doing things at some point and the way things really are when we see and/or philosophize "clearly," "in the light of reason" -- to use some ocular metaphors. Philosophy is, then, the construction of new and hopefully better ways of writing about why the old ways didn't quite get us to the Truth. The paradox which supports this form of writing is the

*metaphysical and/or epistemological belief* that we are finally getting things right, leaning on the right something,<sup>2</sup> that we are learning to know better, (as if we could compare this writing to what we don't yet know, in order to know we're improving and getting closer to "it"). Yet, this belief conjoins itself also with the *historical* view that all our vocabularies thus far seem, at best, to have been or be provisional, perspectival. (I will try to clarify this paradox by retrieving and reformulating it further as we go.)

So, is Philosophy a genre of writing about Truth? Or is this, Truth, the sort of thing, as the Pragmatists have said, about which there is not much of interest to be said? A different way to ask the question is: what is it that is useful, true, interesting or deep about saying that there is something in common between the in-some-sense-true sentences: "Plato wrote Gorgias," " $2 + 3 = 5$ ," "democracy is better than tyranny," and "the grass is green"? What essence of interest could these sentences have that is worth worrying about, or asking a particular discipline called Philosophy to explain? But, it is the history of just such attempts which has most often been considered to constitute that genre we call Philosophy -- instituted by Plato, its founder, and reissued more recently by Descartes, Kant and Carnap, his successors. (So, as the reader sees already, the present narrative will be playing off two stories: Philosophy as writing about what is Truth, and philosophy

---

<sup>2</sup> James writes that, in contrast to the Truth, "the essential service of humanism . . . is to have seen that tho one part of our experience may lean upon another part to make it what it is in any one of several aspects in which it may be considered, experience as a whole is self-containing and leans on nothing." (1909:124)

as writing about what is pragmatically useful at a given time. And I will be following James' skepticism, Dewey's indifference and Rorty's practice regarding the "P" as opposed to the "p" when referring to these different philosophical practices.)

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the issue of Truth, and, hence, philosophy, squared off into another institutional opposition: between "transcendental Philosophy" and "empirical Philosophy," between "Platonists" and "positivists" (Rorty, 1982:xv), i.e., between those philosophers who thought that to be a human subject and rational was to have a foot beyond space and time, requiring belief in things invisible to natural science, and those philosophers who insisted that space and time make up the only Reality there is. Of course this is hopelessly vague. The point is that it is the *totalizing universality* of the claims, and the inevitable opposition to an Other that makes them both Philosophical. What the transcendentalist "saw" as spiritual and primary, the empiricist "saw" as emotional and secondary. And what the latter (the empiricist) "saw" as the pre-eminence of hard fact, the former "saw" as hardly the whole or most eminent side to the story. They both had a different view (using the same metaphors of vision) of what is True and, therefore, of what is Philosophy.

The oppositional "structure"<sup>3</sup> I'm tracking down can be formulated in countless ways: as a dispute between idealists (things are in the mind) and realists (no, they are in the world), or subjectivists

---

<sup>3</sup> I am not yet wanting to refer to *Structuralist* structures.

versus objectivists, transcendentalists versus materialists, platonists versus positivists, theologians versus historicists, belief versus verificationism, socialism versus capitalism.<sup>4</sup> We needn't here decipher all the intricacies of these oppositional loyalties, but simply highlight that in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries most philosophers would claim loyalty to one side or the other. They knew where they stood. And the totalizations of the claims by both sides in cosmological opposition is what *preserved* their commerce and debate with each other, thereby standing for what Philosophy was. What the pragmatists began to suggest was that the statements: "this is True" or "this is Philosophical," were empty metaphysical compliments, overly generous rhetorical pats on the back to different styles of inquiry, and troublesome if taken absolutely seriously. (To rhetoric, I will return shortly.)

This line of attack by the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Nietzsche, on the continent, and James, in Boston, became a 20<sup>th</sup>-century amendment to what we have thus far characterized as *bona fide* Philosophy. It became a part of this textual tradition of setting up grand ontological opposites to criticize the setting up of these opposites in the first place -- opposites like the mind over and against the body, freedom versus determinism. Imagining one side *without* the other seemed unintelligible. They needed each other. Each

---

<sup>4</sup> I refer to this opposition because its difference from the others helps illustrate its similarity. The 19<sup>th</sup>-century opposition between socialism and capitalism illustrates, perhaps more obviously than the others, the mixing of evaluative and social agendas with appeals to foundations (like "human nature") as the device for universalizing the claims to Truth of one position over and against the other. And much of the dispute traded on some of the aforementioned oppositions too.

side was constituted by its contrast with the other; so, dramatizing the opposition as an eternal struggle working toward the final victory of one seemed counter-productive and useless. This is what connects Gorgias, James and Dewey, and Nietzsche, Foucault and Rorty -- the opinion that there is no cosmological fight between *true* knowledge on the one hand and *social practice* on the other, between our true selves and our conventions. Knowledge is what powerful practices put there, and rhetoric is the practice which persuades us to keep or change what we've become. (More about the comparative values and styles of these rhetoricians in the following chapters.)

For Nietzsche, the aphorism, the treatise, and the drama were all settings for perspectival philosophical expression, as demonstration of the power of the story as the co-maker of truth, a power which manoeuvres and gives meaning to the discreet and isolated noun or fact. For Nietzsche, constructs, metaphors were the "forgotten" or suppressed foundations to all systems of Truth, their fluidity having later become frozen in order to stand as that



foundation.<sup>5</sup> The analytic tradition too began to take *itself* apart in a similar (of course less hyperbolic) fashion, with Wittgenstein ridiculing and satirizing his earlier self of the Tractatus (and others) with the dry (occasionally melancholic) wit of his aphorisms and parables about Philosophy which tries, with the use of an opposition (between things and grammars, or "intuitions" and grammars) to get behind language (paradoxically, in *terms* of the grammatical conventions and metaphors of sights and feels).<sup>6</sup> This dissimulation continues with Quine criticizing the

---

<sup>5</sup> "What then is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which became poetically and rhetorically intensified, meta-morphosed, adorned, and after long usage, seem to a nation fixed, canonic and binding; truths are illusions of which one had forgotten that they *are* illusions; worn out metaphors which have become powerless to affect the senses (die abgenützt und sinnlich kraftlos geworden sind), . . ." Nietzsche, "Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne," Werke, Band V, Hanser, 1980:314; trans. "On Truth and Lies in their Extra-moral Sense" in Complete Works of Nietzsche, Ed. Levy, p.180. This has become a communal and hopefully not over-quoted piece, used (perhaps "abgenützt") by both post-structuralist Derrida ("White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," 1982:217), and Paul de Man (The Rhetoric of Romanticism, 1984:239, & Allegories of Reading, 1979:110), and by pragmatists Rorty ("Solidarity or Objectivity?," 1985:14), and J. Margolis, ("Deconstruction; or The Mystery of the Mystery of the Text," 1983:xxxiii).

<sup>6</sup> Nor are these *totally* different traditions. The dense and acute aphorism as technique, as aesthetic/philosophical form (of both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein), frustrates the System as the final product, as the conclusive and revelatory justifier of usage, as the justification or explanation of what are practical "forms of life" (p.226). Wittgenstein, too, notes "The queer resemblance between a philosophical investigation . . . and an aesthetic one." (Culture and Value, 1980.) Wittgenstein's Investigations also echo Nietzsche in regarding grammar and convention as the supports for pseudo problems: and the links between them are quite direct. For Nietzsche, so long as there was grammar there would be essentialists and theologians, philosophical aggrandizers of linguistic convention. Wittgenstein later writes: "Essence is expressed by grammar" (#371). "Grammar tells what kind of object anything is. (Theology is grammar)." (#373). The dryness, rather than the hyperbole, of Wittgenstein's wit is evident when he sees . . . "[a] whole cloud of philosophy condensed into a drop of grammar." (The tone of the German is much more ironic: "Eine ganze Wolke von Philosophie kondensiert zu einem *Tröpfchen Sprachlehre*." (p. 356). (My italics). Wittgenstein, 1976 (English); 1971 (German).

assumptions of positivist Carnap, breaking down the ontologized distinction between the analytic and synthetic;<sup>7</sup> with Davidson deconstructing the dualistic opposition between scheme and content;<sup>8</sup> and (more importantly for my purposes) with Goodman working from his earlier logical conventionalism (The Structure of Appearance, also to escape Carnap) toward his full-blown and aestheticized relativism (Ways of Worldmaking). And more recently Derrida and Rorty are two philosophers who appeal most to irony and satire as a technique for reminiscing about the tradition (Continental *and* Anglo-American), for loosening the hold of the tradition's oppositions on our ability to take up new subjects and new ways of talking; and they do this by offering literary/philosophical, or *rhetorical* readings of great texts -- indeed, as we read, one of Dewey's suggestions. So, the dogmas of positivist empiricism became discredited with the same speed as those of their opposition, the transcendentalists. Philosophy became more pragmaticized. We ended up with some highly technical and professionalized texts, but no orthodoxy; with a lot of history and tradition, but no absolute Truth; with a lot of important philosophical artifacts and critical contributions to the way our culture has coped with itself and reality's many entailments, but not with a mirror of nature or reality, itself uninfected by the culture which copes through such reflections.

---

<sup>7</sup> Cf. especially Quine, 1963.

<sup>8</sup> Davidson, 1973.

### 1.3 THE HISTORICAL SETUP:

What I wish to do is to relocate the historical tension between, say, writing about the True and/or pragmatic writing, between Philosophy and/or literature, prior to the aestheticizations of Nietzsche and James in the presocratics and sophists. In effect, one might locate the origins of the genre of pragmatic philosophy with the rhetoricians. Rather than attempting, like the Dialectician, to hold language in one hand and Reality or Truth in the other and then, by sleight of hand (or pen), fictionalize a third meta-point from which to adjudicate the fit, the rhetorician held some language in one hand and more language in the other, and compared them to see which was more persuasive, not by veridical "correspondence" to an Other up there, but horizontally, in terms of which set of sentences would help most in achieving the desired purposes; not in the eyes (under the gaze) of the Forms or the Absolute, but in the eyes of the Athenian Senate.

Gorgias (of Plato's dialogue of the same name) spoke to the Senate, and Plato to an Academy of speculative Philosophers. (These are significantly different social locations from which to argue.) Rhetoric served a democratic forum, and Dialectic the more authoritarian structure of the as-yet-unformed Republic. Plato polemicized against Gorgias, Protagoras and Isocrates (as did Aristotle) with the use of what he was denying -- rhetoric. (I mention Isocrates because he had an academy too -- of rhetoric.) While rhetoric could "only" (thought Plato) appeal to assent,



Philosophy wanted the "Truth." Plato was, of course, so aware of the art (of poetics and its offspring in sophistic rhetoric) that he banned it from the Republic, banning what he himself used to such great effect. He talks of the purity of the True and the Good, but exploits the rhetorical forms of the day to do so: the dramatic dialogue, irony, satire, and other sophistic tools.<sup>9</sup>

Aristotle, with a less metaphysical turn of mind, wanted facts over rhetorical and persuasive stories, solid nouns over the embellishments of metaphors and Forms -- (more oppositions). But the rhetoricians, as often in the courts as in the classroom, saw that what was crucial was *in* whose story *which* of the facts appeared, how they were marshalled, and for whose benefit. They saw how manipulable was the evidence which Aristotle sought to make the ground of systematic Philosophy. They understood the situation not as an ontological choice *between* facts and/or stories, nouns and/or pictures, images and metaphors; it was, rather, a question of how best to wield the two together for the right purpose -- Plato in service to the Forms, the rhetorician in service of free speech, in a very public form; not, therefore, in the form of a Socratic and extremely private dialogue between ascending and essentially unworldly souls. (I'm thinking here of the "Meno," which exemplifies a style less interested in forms of social change than in metaphysical conversion by *a* form of

---

<sup>9</sup> And Plato's antipathy has not merely to do with the *metaphysics* of Virtue. The sophists became more threatening as they became a professional class and successful teachers of rhetoric. Plato, for example, refers thirty-one times to the sophists' earnings. Cf. W. K. C. Guthrie, The Sophists, 1971:33 & 36.

discourse.) In contrast, the sophists thought of philosophy as involving different forms of discourse, to be compared in the interest of public policy -- (another link between the classical and the pragmatic, especially Dewey). Rhetoric was, to the "free man" of Athens, a primarily social and liberal art, not the discovery of absolute Truth.

Gorgias, speaking of Helen of Troy, said "she acted as she did either (i) by a combination of chance, necessity, and the will of the gods, or (ii) because she was abducted by force, or (iii) because she was seduced by persuasion . . . Persuasion by speech is on a par with abduction by force: . . . The power of speech over the disposition of the soul is comparable with the effect of drugs on the disposition of the body." Remembering also, of course, that "in contending against adversaries, destroy their seriousness with laughter and their laughter with seriousness."<sup>10</sup> (We can easily hear an anticipation of Nietzsche's laughter, hyperbole and mockery of the gods, Foucault's more haunting links between discourse, power and the body, and Plato's irritation at the light-hearted textualization of the soul, open, here, to the ephemeral persuasions of the dandy.) Part of the conflict between Gorgias and Plato was that they were *both* close readers of poetry, and knew its conventions, its power to seduce. But Gorgias wanted to use it to good effect, while Plato feared its negative potential to mislead. Gorgias spoke not about true belief, but, like James much later, about the will to believe, *using* (perhaps) the rhetoric of the

---

<sup>10</sup> Wheelwright, 1966:248-250.

True and the Good for that which is good in the *way* of belief (James, 1907(1981a):42).

The opposition (the point of our first set of caricatures) which the Dialecticians (also the positivists) and followers used in order to relegate the rhetorician was to oppose nature to convention, or, in Greek, *physis* (nature) to *nomos* (literally, "law", or all man-made institutions and conventions). This opposition between nature (or something given) and convention (or something man-made) is recapitulated and continuously rehearsed in Plato's "Form" and Aristotle's fact *versus* man-made metaphor or art, in Kant's (indeed quite different) noumenal thing-in-itself *versus* the phenomenal as we construct it, in Ayer's opposition between the empirical and the emotive and moral, between the verifiable and the sentimental. But also, and perhaps more subtly, the very notions of style, of the aesthetic, of sentiment, have been used throughout the tradition to classify and exclude or marginalize texts as unPhilosophical, as belonging to a different *class* of writing.<sup>11</sup> Or, these notions (of the aesthetic, of style) have been dignified only by becoming "categories" *under* the scrutiny of a Philosophy (like Kant's). (More on this issue also in the following chapters.) But, as James remarks while reproaching his neo-kantian colleagues: "The enormous esteem professed by all philosophers for the conceptual form of consciousness is easy to understand. From Plato's time downwards it has been held to be

---

<sup>11</sup> Cf., for example, A. O. Rorty, 1983:545-564 on how designating a style has functioned as a method of excluding a form of language from the "truly" philosophical.

our sole avenue to essential truth."<sup>12</sup> James' question, like that of the Athenian rhetorician, is no longer: what is *the* single truth, and which concept captures it?, but what is true relative to these circumstances, needs and words?. This is, as Sellars put it, "an attempt to see how things, in the broadest possible sense of the term, hang together, in the broadest possible sense of the term."<sup>13</sup>

Cicero, of course, tried, in the broadest sense of the term, to bring together the Philosophical and the rhetorical, knowledge and purposeful convention, as did Dewey in our quotation (p. 4). And this is one of the connections I wish to make: "What is Philosophy?" is the same question as: "How do we read Plato?". We can read him as the visionary, the politician, the writer, moralist, educator, epistemologist, and as the carefully wrought product of an institution which has highlighted, and in so doing, developed the System, and proceeded to offer critical re-readings of that system. But all of these ways of reading (as the rhetorical tradition of Cicero and Quintilian too will recommend) are legitimately philosophical and un-philosophical, (non-Kantian) aesthetic judgements, involving different genres and a *mixing* of genres, no longer in Metaphysical opposition to each other and vying for position in an ontological/epistemological game of foundational one-upmanship. (More on the role of a *theory of reading* in the construction of the philosophical genre in chapters 4 and 5.)

---

<sup>12</sup> James, 1909a (1981b):247.

<sup>13</sup> Cited by Rorty, 1982:xiv.

Plato, of course, sets Philosophy up in terms of an ethically austere version of the arts, of the art of rhetoric, of all plurality. In the Apology, for example, an early work, Socrates (that is, his *dramatic* persona) is in the court room, embodying the tension between being a court orator for his own defense and a truth-teller for the sake of Dialectic. And it is in the Gorgias, Protagoras and Phaedrus dialogues where one finds both descriptive and polemical discussions of (sophistic) rhetoric: about which Gorgias himself is reported to have said: "How well Plato knows how to satirize!"<sup>14</sup> In other words, Plato was not *representing* the "true" Gorgias with mimetic fidelity, he was interpreting him in service of Dialectic; and he concluded with the opposition that because Gorgias has such a high estimation of rhetoric, he must have a low one of knowledge. The pragmatic function and ubiquity of rhetoric becomes, thereby, obscured because of "Socrates'" insistence on the necessity of True knowledge. But the paradoxical role and power of rhetoric is reinforced through the back door, through the use of humor, techniques of irony, satire and caricature, by rhetorical appeal to mystical pathos, myth, allegory, and later, to a tongue-in-cheek comparison of rhetoric to the art of cooking, i.e., the art of cheap pleasure.

The Gorgias is a useful preliminary illustration of several literary/philosophical themes. It occurs early in Plato's literary career, hence before a fully formed Philosophical and metaphysical system is evident. And Plato's literary style in this instance

---

<sup>14</sup> Cited in Kennedy, 1980:45.

depends upon the employment of myth for the conveyance of "truth" on topics where logically centered processes of dialectical exchange are not applicable. In other words, he is still the exploring writer/thinker, oscillating between a reliance on a "chain of argument" (p. 119) and putting his "faith in [a] story" (p. 147). But either way, his intention is to drive an epistemological wedge between oratory and having specific expertise (p. 32), between rhetorical "pandering" (i.e., appealing to gratification) and "knowing" the "rational" (p. 44). Plato's Socrates is out to construct a thoroughgoing opposition between what takes place in appealing to a popular audience -- pandering -- as opposed to orchestrating a private dialogue. This is, for Socrates, an opposition between "convincing" and "instructing" (p. 32): because having the "knack" (to convince, or cook) is to engage in an activity which has "no rational account to give of the *nature* of the various things which it offers. (My italics.) I refuse, (follows Socrates), to give the title art to anything irrational" (p. 46.). That is, one must "*know the nature of a thing*" or be classed as irrational, unable to "instruct." One must be an "expert" in a form of *knowledge* or a "panderer." But Socrates' analogue, that oratory is to philosophy what cookery is to medicine, (i.e., knack rather than knowledge), illustrates not simply Plato's epistemological agenda, but also his political bitterness and his blurring of epistemological and sociological discourses. In other words, Socrates' attack on the orator is an attack on the politician without specific and expert knowledge of the good: it is an attack on Athenian democracy. The issue is statesmanship, about which



Socrates modestly says: "I believe that I am one of the few Athenians -- perhaps indeed there is no other -- who studies the genuine art of statemanship, and that I am the only man now living who puts it into practice" (p. 140). Is this self-praise an argument or faith in a story? Whatever the category or class of statement, it hardly seems a basis in terms of which one could separate rhetoric and philosophy, convincing and instructing. Gorgias says, on the contrary, that the rhetorician's job is to give "instruction intending that it should be put to a good *use* . . ." (p. 35. My italics.):<sup>15</sup> Implying that "good use" is not something about which one can have absolute and prior knowledge as to "its rational nature." The pragmatists will repeat this refrain.

The Protagoras dialogue extends some of the same themes and gives the sophists a more thorough and challengingly persuasive voice. (One might even say that Socrates comes over looking like a metaphysical quibbler, engaging in several mischievous shifts and irresolutions of argument, less urbane and rhetorically consistent than Protagoras, certainly more bullying and therefore ironically raising (I think) the credibility of the sophists' positions.) The dialogue, qua dialogue, also raises more questions as to the relationship between rhetoric and Philosophy in the establishment of a philosophical genre.

---

<sup>15</sup> All references from Gorgias, Penguin Classics edition, 1985, translation and introduction by Walter Hamilton.

1. Firstly, with respect to virtue, its "metaphysical nature," and whether it can be taught, Socrates wishes to push an epistemologically centered thesis that to imitate it (virtue) one must first know its nature. Protagoras' retort is practical. Imitation is itself a behavioral category: we are "inspired to imitate" good examples, not by knowing the one metaphysical identity of all virtues or by knowing a universal "thing" called virtue by proxy of a special mastery of an ontological form of knowledge, but by comparative example. In other words, Protagoras opts for aesthetic and social education rather than metaphysics, for the use of music and poetry as ways of "familiarizing the minds of the children with the rhythms and melodies" of civilization (p. 57).<sup>16</sup> Protagoras is not simply appealing to the *content* of poetry or music: he is making several methodological points, and by analogy to the aesthetic. Protagoras asks: You are "surprised that virtue should be teachable, and puzzled to know whether it is? The wonder would be if it were not teachable.

"Why then, you ask, do many sons of good men turn out worthless?" His answer-by-analogy is that they can fail to be virtuous just as one can fail to be a good flute-player even when one has had a good teacher (pp. 58-59). In other words, it is not a question of metaphysical knowledge but of practice and aptitude. The second methodological analogy, to practice, pedagogy and skill over metaphysical knowledge as the crucial issue in the teaching of virtue, is Protagoras' reference to our *many* teachers rather

---

<sup>16</sup> All references from Protagoras, Penguin Classics edition, 1986, translation and introduction by W. K. C. Guthrie.



than Socrates' insistence on the *one* true knower. Because "all are teachers of virtue to the best of their ability, . . . you [Socrates] think that no one is. In the same way if you asked who teaches the Greek language you would not find anyone; . . ." (p. 59). Protagoras' point is a relativizing and comparative one; our success vis-à-vis virtue "and everything else" is that we try to "find someone *only a little better than the others* at advancing us . . ." (p. 60. My italics.) And with this discourse, Protagoras offers simultaneously his view of virtue and of the rhetorical genre by which such things are best discussed: in terms of "both the parable and the argument," by persuasion and comparison, in terms of art, good taste and disputation together. (p. 60)

2. Also important in this regard is Protagoras' shift (p. 72) from answerer to questioner, from metaphysics to literary criticism, from our identity as knowers to our skill as readers of poetry: (A test which Socrates fails rather miserably.) "In my view Socrates, the most important part of a man's education is to become an authority on poetry. This means being able to criticize the good and bad points of a poem with understanding, to know how to distinguish them, and give one's reasons when asked. My question to you . . . will concern the subject of . . . virtue, but transferred to the realm of poetry." (The discussion centers on a poem by Simonides.)<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> One should recall here that the poetry being referred to involved *public* performances (rather than private texts), that the sophists were themselves in this tradition of the poets and rhapsodes and saw themselves as their educational successors. Cf. W. K. C. Guthrie's The Sophists, 1971: esp. 42 & 45.

What is of interest is not primarily that Socrates makes a curious attempt to translate "hard" as meaning "bad" (p. 75) and then recants his rather unhelpful interpretation, nor Protagoras' praise for the "Laconic brevity" of poetic diction as an "expresion of philosophy" (p. 78) -- as interesting as these are: What I find more revealing of the generic distinction being questioned here between poetry and philosophy, between literary interpretation and final knowledge, is that Socrates wishes to leave the literary behind because it cannot lead to a final truth. Interpretation and criticism are bad models because they cannot be assimilated into a discourse which "can produce a conclusive argument." Socrates says, "I suggest we leave the subject of songs and poems, for I should be glad to reach a conclusion, Protagoras . . . [S]ome say the poet's meaning is one thing and some another, for the topic is one on which nobody can produce a conclusive argument. The best people avoid such discussions<sup>18</sup> . . . It is the truth, and our own minds, that we should be testing." Reading mind and truth are presumably something quite other than reading texts. But apparently Protagoras isn't so sure of this.

3. With respect to Plato's own narrative technique in the dialogue, Socrates' praise for the revelatory "chain of argument" is compromised. For the dialogue itself mixes the genres of dramatic

---

<sup>18</sup> This is advice which E. D. Hirsch, Jr. and M. H. Abrams did not take. In chapter 5 (pp. 175 n.11 & 194 n. 37) they both attempt to assimilate literary interpretation to the philosophical hope of producing conclusiveness. We are (*contra* Socrates), they seem to argue, after one meaning; or why bother interpreting?.

art and philosophical dispute. And although writing is always considered second best to direct dialogue, it is the artifice of *writing* which allows and encourages such complete and well crafted conversational reconstructions. It is Plato's nearly *novelistic* conventions of presentation which allow the illusion of Socrates' total *dialogical* recall of the debate and his ability to appear as narrator *and* participant. Plato disparages the public lecture (the sophist's art) as a way of imparting knowledge, but the method of "private conversation" is itself groomed into (or, rather, *by*) a publishable text. Plato paradoxically restores textuality as the hallmark of philosophizing.

The Phaedrus has more literary complexity, introducing the theme of love in the language of eroticism, moving from the seduction of rhetoric to its idealization and conversion to Philosophy -- itself accomplished by rhetoric. In the Phaedrus dialogue we can read a philosophical loosening up of eros, a softening of the ontological opposition between it and the rational intellect, a redressing (if not a recantation)<sup>19</sup> of the polemic between the non-cognitive and reason and, therefore, between poetry and philosophy as they relate to ethics and intellectual/literary style. The Phaedrus is a much subtler attempt to realign more constructively the relationship between eros and the good, redressing the balance between sex and intellect. In other words, the slander against

---

<sup>19</sup> Martha Nussbaum, in The Fragility of Goodness, 1986, argues very persuasively, carefully and sensitively for the *Phaedrus* as a very substantial recantation of Plato's previous anti-eros polemic. (Cf. Chapter 7: "'This story isn't true': madness, reason, and recantation in the *Phaedrus*".) I am grateful to Peter Lewis for having brought her work to my attention.

eros is qualified in terms of its potential to motivate and feed the intellect. What I find interesting here (and in Nussbaum's reading) are the implications these requalifications have for the connection between Philosophy and rhetoric. For the positive function of "madness" impinges upon the question of philosophical style. More precisely, the way in which Socrates expresses his skepticism about Lysias' "beautiful speeches" is, in part, a concession to the inseparable weaving of style and content, passion and intellect; and this implies the need to construct a subtler view of the connection between the poet and the philosopher as public rhetoricians once the cognitive and moral efficacy of the poets is conceded. These possibilities within the Phaedrus are still of course a far cry from a conversion to sophism, from seeing philosophy as the teacher of a form of rhetoric and as a supporter of the epistemological skepticism associated with it. What keeps the opposition between philosophy and rhetoric in check is that Plato still keeps the distinction between what goes on in writing and what goes on in the soul as an irrevocable hierarchical and metaphysical precondition of ethical discourse. The individual soul is primary. But even if the Phaedrus is not a complete recantation of the separation between philosophy and rhetoric, the philosopher is now at least *explicitly* and *consciously* allowed to appropriate some aspects of the poetic persona and his rhetorical technique less surreptitiously. Philosophy can now "make use of 'literary' devices such as mythic narrative and metaphor in the center of its teaching; and it can,

like poetry, contain material expressive of, and arousing, a  
passional excitation."<sup>20</sup> Some proximity is restored.

The point to this aperçu is that in the end the *difference* between the Dialectician discovering Truth and the rhetorician attempting to persuade are no different in logical structure,<sup>21</sup> demonstrating no internal technical difference, leaving the belief in the ontological opposition between them unsupported except by the paradox of their juxtaposition and the subtle interweaving of Platonic ideology.<sup>22</sup> I'm not wanting to be uncharitable, but only to highlight the paradox. The Phaedrus starts out playfully *not* Philosophically, by eulogizing the oral dialogical power of Socrates who committed nothing to the power of writing: Plato, of course does, but covers the tension here by suggesting it is a kind of game for his own amusement. He is a rhetorician who distrusts rhetoric; a poet who abolishes poetry from his State; an admirer of spontaneous oral dialectic who publishes highly crafted dialogues. (An analysis of the metaphysician's motivation for privileging

---

<sup>20</sup> Nussbaum, 1986:226.

<sup>21</sup> One could say that it is indeed a virtue of the "technical" rhetorical tradition (with which Plato, in the Phaedrus, shows obvious -- even if polemical and ironical -- familiarity) that they had done so much work precisely on detailing the positive interconnection between logical, tropological and stylistic parts of speech. Plato's representative technical rhetoricians are primarily Hippias and Prodicus. He reviews "their devices" on pp. 83-88. Phaedrus, Penguin Classics edition, 1977, trans. & intro. by W. Hamilton.

<sup>22</sup> The *literary* upshot here for the reading of *philosophical* texts is one which Paul de Man makes the basis for his work: If rhetorical consequences and logical structure cannot be distinguished in a principled way, then we no longer have a justification for dismissing the figures, metaphors and rhetoric of a philosopher as not really a relevant dimension to what is worth discussing philosophically. Cf. also p. 54 n.24.



speech in the *writing* of philosophy will be one of Derrida's themes in chapter 5.)

Aristotle's opposition too is *between* theory, (*theoria*, literally: "spectating") which discovers knowledge, and rhetoric, which discovers the available means of persuasion (as if knowledge and our means for managing it were separated by some mysterious ontological chasm). He doesn't really *define* persuasion (which would have threatened his own opposition); for, in the back door it comes in *his* attempt to persuade us as to the so-called "nature" of knowledge. Aristotle is not really interested in rhetoric, and his discussion of it is primarily generic, defining genres and species of rhetoric. It is through essentially classificatory manoeuvres that he subsumes rhetoric *under* Dialectic. Again the *opposition* and the victory of one side is reconstituted under the guise of classification.

Aristotle produces two sorts of argument in his Rhetoric under this guise of (merely) classifying certain uses of language: both epistemological and normative. That is, in Book Three, Chapter II, metaphor is subsumed under the prior epistemological criterion of its "likeness" to things given. And in chapters V and XII style and rhetoric are accountable to Aristotle's sense of linguistic propriety and good manners. In other words, metaphor, style and rhetoric are not *constitutive* of anything; they are, rather, formalistic followers of a content already given. Metaphor, according to Aristotle, can not be constructive or *generative* of "likeness" (and

certainly not allowed to be *disruptive* of habituated uses); it is the recognition of likeness. In effect, metaphors are "appropriate if they point to a proportional likeness." (p. 70) This epistemological and ontological argument stipulates that the "transference" of the qualities combined in a metaphor are based on the *prior* recognition of "things closely akin and similar . . . in kind." (p. 71) And what kinds these are are themselves decided upon by previous classification.

As for the normative reduction of rhetoric and style (in Book Three, Chapter V), the "requirements of style" are simply to "write good Greek." (p. 76) For Aristotle, style is a species of accepted rules of grammar, to be understood along with other briefly sketched professorial and textbook-like requirements: to "avoid ambiguity," keep a sharp eye out for gender, and follow the "correct use of singular and plural." In other words, "what we write should be easy to read and easy to speak, which comes to the same thing."<sup>23</sup> In other words, writing, rhetoric and style are not considered as "categories" to be seen through literature. Rather, literature is a domain insofar as it is governed by conventions of acceptable speech. When Aristotle does address "variations in style" (Chapter XII), his interest remains taxonomic *and* socially motivated. So, when he does make a distinction between writing and speaking, he says "written style is the more precise" only because he views speech as (unfortunately) dependent on the tricks and seductions associated with public

---

<sup>23</sup> With such sentiments Grice (p. 153 ff.) will agree, and Derrida (p. 206 n. 50) will not.

delivery (p. 97), and writing as presumably a medium for the ethically more austere to escape such "pandering." Hence, within the "three kinds of rhetoric," the "forensic style" is the best because speaking to a judge rather than to a crowd leaves less "opportunity for rhetorical display." (p. 99)<sup>24</sup> Thus Aristotle's *practical* observation here is converted into a classificatory principle: rhetoric is classified as formal display, as a phenomenological and removable vehicle for the essence of things (the content).

A concluding counterclaim would be that for argument and the acquisition and exchange of knowledge to take place at all, a shared discourse, (or rhetoric, if you will), is required. Successful philosophical classification, rigor and refutation are only *possible* in terms of standards being shared and accredited by a community of inquirers -- to refer to Peirce and Dewey. (More on the pragmatic role of the community in chapter 3 and following.) And what Plato and Aristotle among others in the philosophical community have shared is precisely this opposition *between* language and something Other which makes itself present for purposes of comparison. (On the "metaphysics of presence" and Derrida's rhetorical twists of it, cf. chapter 5.)

Pedagogically speaking, Plato's power was his use, and the clever effacement of his use of persuasion, polemic and the power of language -- as Gorgias well knew. The point to all this is that

---

<sup>24</sup> The preceding references are from Aristotle, On Poetry and Style, (ed. & transl.) G. M. A. Grube, 1958.



rhetoric has continuously squeezed through the big net of Grand theory, grand oppositional Philosophy -- "master narratives," as Lyotard calls them.<sup>25</sup> One might say that Isocrates *successfully* competed with Plato with his academy of rhetoric. Rhetoric remained of great importance in the middle ages -- and indeed through Cicero and Quintillian who, ironically, knew much about rhetoric through the Aristotelian grapevine. It had wide appeal in the renaissance, (especially in the art world when Theology was too barren a stimulus), and remained a discipline taught in the universities, including British and early American colleges through most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. And, presently, questions of a rhetorical cast are seeping into a wide range of disciplines under the sponsorship of contemporary literary theory, especially as it attempts to reengage philosophy in discussing the nature of "its" texts. (For example: in the work of Paul De Man, Stanley Fish, Harold Bloom, and in Philosophy, through Derrida and Rorty). (More on this following.)

This has reopen[n]ed in an interesting way the question of what Philosophy "is," of how we (and on what basis we) constitute "its" canon; and, again, looking at our opening quotation from Dewey, it has raised the question of what constitutes a philosophical way of reading. The suggestion here (Rorty's) is that one curriculum might rightly choose to read Plato, Kant and Quine, and another, Plato, Coleridge and Kafka; and there will indeed be different worlds, being written in different ways, through various genres,

---

<sup>25</sup> Lyotard, 1984. (More on Lyotard and the rhetoric of the "post-modern" in chapter 6.)

supported by different academic industries and commentaries, reading for different things. The point is that the difference is not justifiable by comparing the philosophical group to some external standard of Truth, while viewing the other family of texts as suspicious deviants from the Truth. The difference is not justifiable in the classical manner, by ontological opposition: as if Philosophers have no rhetoric but lots of Truth; they, the writers, have no Truth but lots of clever rhetoric.

Philosophy, then, (the argument runs) need not distrust rhetoric and define itself by its suppression or opposition, as so much of our tradition does when it appeals to its clear, uninfected vision of the truth, as if its (usually linguistic) means have become transparent. The linguistic medium or means never comes to anything naked, emptied of itself, being something and yet nothing. We don't get it both ways. Its very power (the pragmatists argue/implore/chide) is its *positive* ability to carry on its back at all times, meanings, interests, histories and purposes which define who we are as inquirers, giving us some managerial grip on our worlds. The un-erasable role of rhetoric simply encourages us not to presuppose that there is some way of breaking out of language in order to compare it with something else, but also that there are good *social* reasons for encouraging some sorts of language more than others. Language criticizes and

enlarges itself;<sup>26</sup> and philosophy is one of the arts which contributes. But one cannot see language-as-a-whole in oppositional relation to something it is not, but to which it applies. The arts, sciences and literature, and philosophy as one form of their self-reflection, constitute this criticism and enlargement.

After a little while, that is, after about 2,000 years of this platonic urge to escape the finitude of our intellectual escapades, (our conventions, our "nomos"), and compare ourselves with the structure of things, (with something absolute, natural or foundational), this urge need not define that genre of writing we call philosophy. It is more flexible and ambidextrous when it is not so defined, but pictured, rather, as an art helping us to improve our taste (as Hume and Dewey encourage), to refine our ability to judge the various ways we talk, between the various self images we produce. Philosophy is the attempt, in various ways, at various times, and in various cultural contexts, persistently and sometimes rigorously to manage this tension between what we are given (or how we are "funded," as Dewey put it) and what we want, between what we find and what we make, between what we discover and know, and what we construct -- often in the very process of discovery. It is the

---

<sup>26</sup> "Language" is here a metonymy for "communities of users." I wish simply to attribute the dynamics of criticism and enlargement to the domain of discourse rather than to an epistemological domain which goes hunting for foundational constraints as a way to govern (from the "outside") the vicissitudes of criticism and changing discourses. Nor do I wish to imply (as some "structuralist" theory does) that language is some hypostatized meta-entity without contextual relations which we can capture in its totality through a general vocabulary of "structure."

question: *how* do these things -- truths, images -- *work* ; and what sort of work do they *do*?

If it is left to the philosopher to argue, say, that it *is* true in some *particular* sense that democracy is better than tyranny, that Plato "misread" (in a Bloomian sense) Gorgias,<sup>27</sup> he would do his best to be persuasive, to offer demonstrations, flex as many traditional philosophical and rhetorical muscles as were at his or his culture's disposal. But, (as a "post-modern") he would probably accept the possible futility of such strategies, and the irony implicit in being too sure. He probably wouldn't think any longer that the cosmos has made metaphysical provisions for the survival or necessity of the ideas and procedures he holds most dear, or that a Modernist aesthetic could or should provide an edifice capable of stabilizing them nevertheless. His ambidexterity is in his writing seriously with his right hand what he knows his left hand can unwrite or make fun of. He is a writer, as the postmodern writer/theorist

---

<sup>27</sup> For Bloom, 1980, "there are *no* texts, but only relationships *between* texts:" (e.g., Gorgias' to Plato's). And these relationships depend upon critical acts, upon *misreadings* which one reader/writer performs upon another. According to Bloom, the "influence-relationship" governs all reading and writing; it motivates the need (e.g., Plato's) to "misread;" and it is crucial for understanding the very notion of "tradition" and the very ambivalent process of canon-formation. It is "creative misreading" which forms the basis of literary history, (which sets up the polemic between say, rhetoric and Platonism). Bloom's emphasis on action, criticism and alteration are interests which resonate very closely with the pragmatist tradition, with its style of reading, writing, and criticizing the tradition. And Emerson is a key figure for both. More on some connections between literary theory, pragmatism, and Bloom's work in chapter 6.

John Barth has put it, who can only rise above traditional quarrels by having the bits he needs "under his belt, but not on his back."<sup>28</sup>

Telling a story about philosophy which reads it as a form of criticism rather than Truth decreases its traditional privileges, but increases its versatility. Philosophers are no longer the final arbiters of nature, knowledge, goodness, truth or beauty -- even when they have concepts of them. These issues have been largely disseminated to more concrete projects within different disciplines. But the philosopher can still sneak up behind anyone, the scientist, the politician, the writer, and ask how he understands himself and what he does; he can ask critically: does it hang together, and how does it hang together with what other people do in the largest sense of the term hang together? The further narration of this story of what philosophy is will be an attempt to move *between* the classical Philosophy of deep oppositions (ultimately to be overcome in the interest of Truth) and classical rhetoric (which didn't like such a starting point); it will be an attempt to move between philosophers and literary theorists as they work to understand and criticize their own activities and textual productions; to move between pragmatists and deconstructionists as they interpret the value of the canon and pick out their heroes within and sometimes without it. So, to try and answer Dewey, are we inept visionaries or subtle dialecticians?, political reformers or founders of new types of

---

<sup>28</sup> Barth, 1980:70. Rorty too will be appealed to as an example of the sort of style Barth recommends for writing within a genre with too many traditional "givens."

writing?, moral exhorters or instructors in academies?, educators or inventors and critics of methods of knowledge?: We (the argument continues to run), trying to interpret ourselves, should find it difficult to answer but find the genres available for trying many.



## 2.1 THE PERSISTENCE OF THE RHETORICAL:

"The persistence of the rhetorical," for two reasons: Firstly, Joseph Margolis has recently written about the "Persistence of Reality," and rightly so.<sup>1</sup> Contrary to the Metaphysicians' worries that James had thrown in the towel and given up his rights to talk about the "real" or the "world," and the "technical realists'" backlash (against views like Rorty's) for the same reasons,<sup>2</sup> the pragmatist tradition has never really worried about whether the world is there or not, but only about which vocabularies we say have privileged access to it, about what gets excluded in the process, and about what authorities we worship as a consequence. Margolis articulates a "pragmatism without foundations" in service of a "rapprochement" with "scientific progress." But whether one chooses to offer apologetics for progress in science (Dewey did this too.) and/or for the openness and *indeterminacy* of the "foundations" and "progress" of science, a rhetoric for so doing is always required: hence its persistence.

The second reason: The history of rhetoric (as it will be sketched), as well as the question of rhetoric (as it will be asked in this and the following chapters) offers the sense of an (albeit, often destabilized) trajectory which the leap into the contemporary, the

---

<sup>1</sup> C.f. Margolis, Pragmatism Without Foundations: Reconciling realism and Relativism, 1986, which is the first installment of a trilogy: "The Persistence of Reality."

<sup>2</sup> by, for example, Saul Kripke, "Naming and Necessity," 1972, and Michael Dummett, Truth and Other Enigmas, 1978.

post-modern, would immediately deny. In a period when "discourses," "traditions" and "theories" are created, inflated, consumed and exhausted within decades, a fictional yet purposeful construct (in Vaihinger's sense, in his The Philosophy of "As if", 1924), which we might call "the rhetorical," is quite useful, if not required. The velocity of "post-modern" literary physics (and the aura of its ungraspability)<sup>3</sup> prevents any glib overviews: it won't submit to coordination or solution by technique (structuralism), or to easy generic and historical ordering (historicism). And, although the dissolution of orthodoxy and technique might easily lead to the aphorism, the hyperbolic essay, the "play of the signifier" as appropriate styles for its evocation, even Nietzsche and Wittgenstein waited until they had attempted a discursive, treatise-like practice -- their aesthetic apprenticeship -- before they went in that rhetorical direction.<sup>4</sup> Hence, a discussion of the pragmatics of the "post-modern" must be deferred until something else is developed over and against which it can be played off -- i.e., a pragmatic tradition of rhetoric.

## 2.2 "PRIMARY" RHETORIC:

The following ten points are a condensed and introductory summary of some of the precedents in the classical tradition which are of pragmatic interest and *pre-emptive* historical value

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Charles Newman, The Post-Modern Aura: The Act of fiction In An Age of Inflation, 1985, for a witty and worldly critique of the all-too-compatible and uncomfortable relationship between post-modernism and contemporary American consumerist culture.

<sup>4</sup> -- writing first The Birth of Tragedy (before The Anti-Christ) and the Tractatus (before the Philosophical Investigations) respectively.

(for the ensuing argument) within the "primary" (oral-performative) tradition:

1. Language was understood neither as a metaphysical medium nor a Dialectical pathway to higher realms; nor was it understood as primarily propositional, "empirical" and tied to worldly objects -- as the platonists and positivists respectively proposed. It was understood (and used) as *persuasive*.

2. Language was contextualized primarily within the workings of *civic life* (not mental life) where "speech acts" were important stagings of social drama in which (*contra* Searle) the ability to allegorize and fictionalize was not parasitic on some other "deeper" set of givens.<sup>5</sup> Style and tropes, for Gorgias, were not qualities "laid on" to thoughts; they were part of the very invention of thought and speech. They were not transferred from a "proper" meaning later embellished; they were already interacting in the provisional establishments of accepted usage. (This point will resurface in Derrida's critique of "le propre" and his discussion of "metaphor in the text of Philosophy:" In other words, the metaphor can only be considered *improper*, secondary and "laid on" if a stable, pure and foundational truth-conditional can be found to underly language. And no such "thing" seems to be forthcoming. (This issue will be expanded in chapter 5.)

---

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Fish, 1980:ch.9 and Rorty, 1982:ch.7 for criticisms of Searle's assumptions regarding his distinction between fictional and "normal" discourses. (More on this issue in chapter 3.)

3. Rhetoric was primarily *oral*, lending itself less to the totalizing embellishments of "textuality" (and ensuing publication within the academic industry as the outcome which contemporary "theories of writing" proliferate: *contra* Derrida and company); but lending itself more, therefore, to the responsibilities of public political discourses and argumentation: a context in which the consequences of rhetorical practice were not taken over by "secondary" (literary) rhetoric, by the "private" text, or by the "poetics of isolation" common in the Romantic movement. (This is not an attempt to identify the oral with speech and attribute to speech some "originary presence" and onto-epistemological priority -- which Derrida rightly questions. It is not an attempt to do epistemology at all but, rather, sociology. The oral may be "textualized" as in speech writing, and oral/acoustic qualities may be expressed in texts which are never read or heard aloud. But theories, like Derrida's, which drag all discursive activities through the elevation of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century preoccupation with textual technique (Nietzsche) neglect the oral power restored by radio and television in the 20<sup>th</sup> -- not an insignificant phenomenon regarding rhetorical form and consequences: Hitler would have been an unintelligible rambler if confined to a text.). The oral remains, therefore, an important dimension to the socio-pragmatics of rhetoric, to the aesthetics of language and style.

The obvious momentum of the Western tradition (technological and intellectual) to shift from persuasion to narration, from civic to personal contexts, and from disputation to literature (printing),

is not sufficient to justify the ontological extension of "textuality" as the foundational metaphor of all discourse -- which equates rhetoric with *literary* devices. (Still *contra* Derrida.)

4. Oratory is conjoined with *civic power* and confrontation in such a way as to prevent the collapse of such an art into "art for art's sake" (Baudelaire), into merely "significant form" -- (a Bell which rings untrue in a social context). That is, oratory does not support a separatist or a formalist aesthetic of *social autonomy*. (As an aside: In the rhetoric of India and China, harmony more than victory was the goal; and a less confrontational and polemical tradition of relating philosophy and rhetoric ensued.)

5. "Technical rhetoric" grew most directly out of the *social* needs of the (elitist) democracies of Sicily and Greece, (not out of a romanticism of self-expression to elevate the literary dandy). And this political forum generated the pragmatic connection *between* stylistics and how one questioned the civil order, (as many "modernists" of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century artworlds will implore); and the political forum of the rhetoricians entailed the connection between inquiries into the "nature of language" and its *ordinary use* long before the category of language was positivistically "formalized" and the category of "ordinary language" was required as a corrective. In other words, the question of rhetoric implies the question of *style*, and asks it pluralistically from the start: Which style should be used for



which purpose?<sup>6</sup> A robust notion of style becomes the heart of understanding its pragmatic efficacy. And its efficacy is improved because of its strategic plurality. (This too will be developed explicitly by Bacon, Dewey and later by post-modernists.)<sup>7</sup>

6. The *juridical* background of "sophistic" rhetoric recognized the power of a public forum to determine what counted as *law* and *fact*; and recognized the politics of assent as that which established their foundations. Hence, facts and foundations were a function of persuasion not of philosophical discovery. That is, so long as "rhetoric" remains a self-conscious category, "facts" remain suspicious entities. In a court room where at least two different stories are going to be told, facts are *presentational* not *representational*, neutral and autonomous. They are motivated (as Kuhn, 1970, reminds us) and *narrative-bound*, open to bribery and fraud. Courtroom rhetoric was, therefore, less interested in the

---

<sup>6</sup> Against those "who claim to possess the only true style," Cicero intermittently praises Demosthenes as "the master of all styles." (*Orator*, 1942:298.)

<sup>7</sup> T. Eagleton, 1981, also offers a politicized reading of the history of "rhetoric," as the theory *and* practice of effective discourse, the theory and practice of relativistic *and* powerful signification. This simultaneity is thoroughly Deweyian. Eagleton writes that the history of rhetoric entails "both the theory of effective discourse and the practice of it;" or, put in a more explicitly political vocabulary: "Its intention, quite consciously, was systematically to theorize the articulations of discourse and power, and to do so in the name of political practice: to enrich the political effectivity of signification." Cf. Eagleton, 1981:101, 102. M. Hadas, *A History of Latin Literature*, 1962, also stresses the importance of the political context not only for the practice and career of Cicero, but also with respect to questions of his philosophy and style. The conditioning power of historical circumstances and the development of a theoretical eclecticism as the necessary support for a successful rhetoric are especially clear in the *Brutus* dialogue. It is perhaps not insignificant also that it is in a book on Latin literature (Hadas') that one can read an account of Cicero (of rhetoric) as literature *and* philosophy. In philosophy histories one seldom finds mention of Cicero or the role and obvious social interplay and competition between Philosophy and the rhetorical tradition.



positivism of proof than in the persuasiveness of probabilities (What are the chances that so and so would do such and such?), in the role of motivation (And *why* would they want to do it?), and in the factual-hermeneutic indeterminateness such questions produce.

What Aristotle said about the court room was that:

"The just thing is to seek nothing in speech either to annoy or to delight the audience. It is just for cases to be tried on the basis of the *facts themselves* in such a way that everything other than their demonstration is *irrelevant*. But these other factors have great influence, as has been said, because of the *depravity* of the audience. Saying something in such and such a way makes some difference in making it *clear*, though not so much as is thought. All these things are forms of *fantasy* and directed to the hearer: nobody teaches *geometry* like this. (My italics) (Rhetoric 3.1)<sup>8</sup>

This is, of course, standard dialectical fare, dualistically separating "facts themselves" from those dubious "forms of fantasy," "clarity" from "depravity," the pure unit of fact from the style and narrative within which it is expressed. But Aristotle does not make it clear just how many cases of social substance are solved along the aesthetically formalistic and abstracted lines of geometry. What we are left with is the geometry teacher as the rhetorical trope of the pure, rational and disinterested intellect:

---

<sup>8</sup> Cited in G. A. Kennedy's, Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times, 1980:78.

But how relevant is the geometry teacher in the context of the court room?<sup>9</sup>

Zeno the Stoic compared dialectic (and its appeal to "logical proof") to a closed fist, rhetoric to an open hand (Cicero: Orator:113).<sup>10</sup> On rhetoric, Aristotle is, like most of the mainstream tradition, rather professorially closed. He does, of course, note a positive analogy between rhetoric and the arts, (between painting a scene orally or visually); and the proximity of rhetoric and the arts is often pointed out elsewhere, thus performing the double service for that sort of dialectical Philosophy which would prefer them to keep each other company on the *other* side of the Truth, safely under the gaze of the Philosopher.

7. Language was, thereby, understood not in terms of epistemological constraint but as a *pedagogical* "instrument" for the development and coordination of public *praxis* -- a side to rhetoric which doesn't go unnoticed in the narrative pedagogies of

---

<sup>9</sup> In contrast, Cicero's recommendation -- "officia oratoris" (duties of the orator) -- is not to separate "proofs," the provision of probabilities and appealing to passion. Ethos and pathos are differences of degree, in terms of which "we call their hearts (in a court room) to what emotion the case demands." In effect, duty (not "depravity," on the one hand, not "geometry," on the other) is the bridge between epistemology and eloquence, knowing and persuading, ethics and artifice. Cf. Book 2.115.

<sup>10</sup> "Zeno, the founder of the Stoic school, used to give an object lesson of the difference between the two arts; clenching his fist he said logic was like that; relaxing and extending his hand, he said eloquence was like the open palm."

Plato and Aristotle, (as MacIntyre points out in *After Virtue*),<sup>11</sup> but which is more widely exploited by Bacon and Dewey. The *institutionalization* of rhetoric (for pedagogical purposes) in the academy (from Isocrates, then diluted but evident through to the 19<sup>th</sup>-century university) gave it further pragmatic and competitive solidity vis-à-vis Philosophy. The academy (Isocrates') furthered "practical philosophy," the study of speech *and* politics, form *and* content, without separation.

8. The essentially *moral/epistemological polemic* of Plato and Aristotle against sophistic rhetoric is precisely what highlights, (by attempting to ridicule), rhetoric's aesthetic powers and potential to engender social change, to threaten (as well as support) a "given" order.<sup>12</sup> The sophists understood knowledge to be acquired through disputation not through vision, through what Rorty calls "conversation" not "mirroring." (This link will developed in chapter 6.) The sophists, in effect, made knowing like ethics, a function of public speech situations, a function of the

---

<sup>11</sup> MacIntyre, 1981, is being alluded to because he draws on this (pedagogical) side of Aristotle in opposition to the political epistemology of the Republic, thereby appealing to the rhetoric of narrative judgement rather than to metaphysical fixing as the appropriate language of social *praxis*. In other words, Aristotle is closer to the sophists than is Plato in the social sense that he preferred the language of "becoming good" to knowing the metaphysical identity of virtue in advance. To the socratic demand to find one definition of virtue, he, like Protagoras, enumerates several: the virtues and the language of virtue fall into the category not of truth but of narrative praxis.

<sup>12</sup> That the sophists were non-Athenians, collected fees for their teaching and public displays, were becoming thereby a professional class, and yet their wandering too prevented them from becoming accountable political participants, all contributed to their being seen (from a "Philosophical" standpoint) suspiciously if not indeed as a social threat. Cf. Guthrie, 1971:esp. Chapter III, "What is a Sophist?".

normative, the contingent and the stylized. (And yet they resisted making the category of the "public speech situation" into another transcendental Foundation to cope -- as Habermas, 1982, attempts to -- with this aestheticization of social theory.) (Cf. chapters 5, p. 181 n.<sup>17</sup>, and 6, pp. 235 & 236 for further reference to Habermas.)

9. Because the construction of discourses was always in terms of a creative compositional *purpose*, discourse did not, (contrary to Aristotle and his analytic, empiricist, and structuralist successors), become conceived *in general*, in terms of determinative structural rules which, for the empiricist strain, find their foundation in the apolitical (rhetorical) constraints of sense, and which, for the structuralist strain, find their foundation in an abstract and atemporal dialectic (or rhetoric) of differences between signs (*Passim* Saussure, 1974. Cf. chapter 4). The model metaphor was not "grammar" but manipulation, to stir the audience's "will to believe" in what would be "better to believe."<sup>13</sup>

10. The "good orator" was, for Cicero and Quintilian, the "central man" in the same way the poet was for Emerson -- for whom ethics and eloquence were necessary correlates, interwoven genres. Cicero seeks to *reconcile* the "ideal orator with the

---

<sup>13</sup> James, 1907 (1981a):42.

eloquent philosopher,"<sup>14</sup> the intellectual and the citizen, in the figure of the "dutiful orator" (whom both Plato and Aristotle feared).<sup>15</sup> And Quintilian too attempts to combine "artistic excellence and moral goodness," making rhetoric the centerpiece to the training of the citizen, to the whole of education<sup>16</sup> -- all of which belongs to the sophistic tradition and to the pragmatic tradition. Thus, the aesthetic of this eloquence was not confined to a disembodied and depoliticized kantian faculty of the imagination (as taken up later by Croce, Collingwood, and the politically reactionary Scruton). The imagination was, itself, a figure which coordinated the rational, the moral and the imaginative with their effective public expression. (As is already

---

<sup>14</sup> -- more so in his later work De Oratore (On the Orator) than in his earlier and more technical De Inventione (On Invention). It is also worth recalling that, with respect to the question of genre, De Oratore is written as an essay and (like Plato) in the form of a dialogue (with a realistic setting), rather than in the style (say) of an epistemological textbook. Nor is Cicero's Orator in the form of a treatise; it is, rather, in the form of a letter: an idiom of persuasion rather than proof, committed to a style of address rather than objective demonstration. And after Cicero's enforced retirement from political life he consoled himself also with the essay as the appropriate genre for interpreting Greek philosophy. Cf. D. P. Lockwood, A Survey of Classical Roman Literature, Vol. I, 1971:esp. 181-186.

<sup>15</sup> It is indeed the reissuing of arguments against rhetoric from Plato's Gorgias, as they are employed in the dispute between Philosophy and rhetoric and their respective roles in Roman secondary education, which forms the background to De Oratore. Cf. Kennedy 1980: 89.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria (Education of the Orator), esp. Book 12.1 "The Good Orator must also be a Good Man" and 12.2 "The Morals of the Orator." On the ethics of discourse Quintilian *reverses* the Platonic relationship between Philosophy and rhetoric: ". . . my advice is not that I want the orator to be a philosopher, since no way of life is more remote from political duties or from every function of the orator. For what philosopher haunts the courts, or is a familiar figure in political meetings? . . . I want my pupil to be a wise man, . . . who shows himself to be a political figure not by hole-and-corner hair splittings but in the active give and take of practical life. . . I look forward to the day when some perfect orator . . . may take over the field of philosophy, unpopular as it is because of its lofty pretensions, and, coming into its own again, may lead philosophy back into the fold of rhetoric." Book 12.2.6-10, trans. MacKendrick, in Classics in Translation, Vol. II, (eds.) P. MacKendrick & H.M. Howe, 1975:359.



becoming obvious, my interest here is to schematize the background of the rhetorical tradition in a way which links it to the pragmatist tradition and, thereby, bypasses the detour which questions of aesthetics took into 18<sup>th</sup>-century faculty-psychology and 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century philosophy of mind.)

As is also becoming obvious, Cicero and Quintilian (and later Emerson, James and Dewey) are the heroes of this list of rhetorical virtues through their attempts to bring together -- without appealing to epistemology or foundationalist theories of knowledge -- the sophistic and Aristotelian traditions of rhetoric and praxis, aesthetics and ethics. This tradition is an appeal to pragmatic, non-Dialectical "sources" which are pagan, secular and relative, not Platonic and mystical, not emotivist and psychological.<sup>17</sup> The mystical and the psychological are two styles of doing aesthetics which have had great impact on romantic aesthetics (Croce, 1922) and British psychologicistic aesthetics (Collingwood, 1938) respectively; both of which, from different perspectives (of a not entirely unshared idealism), converted the aesthetic into a question of the mental, thereby focussing subsequent analysis on the philosophy of mind, on bridging "psychical distances" (Bullough, 1912 [1957]). And it is this which the rhetorical/praxis tradition criticized in advance (that is, it changed the subject and undermined the ontological dualism which produced the "distance"); and which the pragmatist tradition competed with at the time (Dewey, 1934); and which

---

<sup>17</sup> Cicero writes: "The Sophists are the source from which all this has flowed into the forum . . .", *Orator*, 1942:375.



George Dickie's "institutional theory" has more directly aimed at criticizing in the present (Dickie, 1974). In other words, it is by making the aesthetic a *secondary* function of an *a priori* Philosophy of "mind" that the rhetoric of essences and of metaphysically privileged Truths can persist in trying to oust their own rhetoricity, their own artifactuality. (It will be the post-modernists who reverse this relation between Philosophy and the aesthetic, in favor of a non-hierarchicalized and reciprocally supportive view of the relation between the philosophical and the aesthetic. Cf. chapter 6.)

### 2.3 LITERARY RHETORIC:

The transition I wish to make here (on the back of the previous sketches) refers to the study of rhetoric and rhetoricity as they become primarily the domain of the writer, and then, later, of the literary historian and critic, (while remaining the fear of the Truth seeker). The Philosopher, while busy looking for foundations, nouns, solid truths and arguments, leaves the literary theorist to remind him of the centrality of rhetoric, of the tropes and metaphors which organize the narrative and socio-allegorical "structures" (or supports) of texts, to remind him of the positive variety of genres and persuasive manoeuvres exhibited in Philosophical texts themselves -- (as both Paul de Man and Stanley Fish will argue).

A key notion in the classical texts of Philosophy, rhetoric and aesthetics is the notion of *mimesis*, or imitation. But, in Philosophy it has traditionally been a trope conditioned to perform epistemological service. As in the title of Auerbach's well known book, Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature, *mimesis* is a trope which tends to retain the connection between imitation and representation with some epistemological theory being the unsuppliable excluded middle needed to link something which we know to a copy parasitic on this prior "given." Whereas, it is the *interplay* between the genre of writing-about-the-real and the aesthetic "imitation" which rhetoric explores, without the aid of, or appeal to, a prior and more real "Form" to which it con-forms. "O Menander, o life!" exclaimed (probably) Aristophanes, "Which one of you imitated the other?"

1. In other words, in the poetics of traditional rhetoric, imitation is *dramatic* imitation, fictionalized from the start. Be it tragedy, mockery, or some other "imitational" summary of the emotional/mythological qualities of a life-type constructed for some ethical/allegorical purpose, the relation between imitated and imitation, between Menander and life, (between what Peirce and the Structuralists later call the "sign" and the "signified"), is horizontal, reciprocal; it is a comparison between two sides of a single and constructed distinction which effect each other. The rhetoric of imitation does not substantiate a neoplatonic, vertical, ontological and epistemological relation between a changing world

of aesthetic construction on the one hand and an unchanging world of metaphysical Truth on the other.

2. Secondly, rhetoricians and poets "imitated" older rhetoricians and poets. They "imitated" a *tradition* -- (and this was the predominant ideology of imitation up until the Romantic movement). Their "truths" were already textualized, part of an aesthetic tradition. Imitation was, for them, training not epistemological inquiry, pedagogy not Metaphysics. By imitating, they acquired technique and social function. It is not that they imitated the "real world" through the blurry obfuscation of "opinion," but that the classical "art world" recognized a set of *practices to be performed* by those said to imitate. What mediated imitated and imitation (signified and signifier, in contemporary jargon) was style, or, a highly stylized and socially motivated activity. Those who studied with Isocrates (and likewise with Socrates) learned his philosophy, morals, political ideas; but above all they learned to imitate his style. And Plato, in this sense, is indeed a wonderful imitator. (The sophists become, in this regard, part of the institutional canon which constitutes the literary genre *against* which Plato sets up the epistemological ideology of imitation.)<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> As a way to read Plato within the *rhetorical* tradition, Dewey writes: "Nothing could be more helpful to present philosophizing than a "Back to Plato" movement; but it would have to be back to the dramatic, restless, co-operatively inquiring Plato of the Dialogues, trying one mode of attack after another to see what it might yield; back to the Plato whose highest flight of metaphysics always terminated with a social and practical turn, and not to the artificial Plato constructed by unimaginative commentators who treat him as the original university professor." (Dewey, 1930, vol.II:20.)

The twist here, in referring to *mimesis* as relating most closely to the constructed (fictional) and institutional (to do with tradition), is that the aestheticization of the concept of "imitation," and with it the concept of "representation," leads not to the question, "in what way, or how well does art or Philosophy imitate, or correspond to, or represent the world?"; it leads, rather, to the question, "with what styles of writing (say) philosophical texts, do different philosophers align themselves with (or imitate, in the pedagogical and institutional sense) and why;<sup>19</sup> and how do these different sets of texts stylize, organize and interpret the world they *intend* to represent?." This is, I think, the relativizing significance of "secondary" rhetoric (and later, of contemporary literary theory) for philosophical aesthetics, and of aesthetics for philosophy.

---

<sup>19</sup> Cicero (as a precedent for Dewey's rhetorical reading) is also able to offer a critical but positive reading of Plato precisely by reading him from within a literary and rhetorical genre (and not within an epistemological genre) of writing. It is indeed due to its "literary quality" that Cicero refers (*Orator*, 1942:337) to the *Phaedrus*. It is perhaps still with reference to the *Phaedrus* (p. 351) that he writes: "Plato was, in dignity and grace, easily the first of all writers or speakers," and, in this sense, one who can be imitated. But when referring to Plato and Aristotle as philosophers, the criteria of criticism are still style and effect: "It is therefore easy to distinguish the eloquence which we are treating in this work from the style of the philosophers. The latter is gentle and academic . . . there is no anger in it, no hatred, no ferocity, no pathos, no shrewdness; it might be called a chaste, pure and modest virgin." Recalling our previous discussion on the *Phaedrus* (p. 23), Cicero's remarks (on "chaste style") are perhaps a gloss on Plato's metaphysical ambivalence toward *eros* and its correlate in Plato's stylistics. Cicero sees *eros* and "good oratory" as reciprocally related. Virtue and style are not separable, but quite the contrary; a more plural and ambidextrous style is a virtue. Plato worries about the link between sex and style in terms of the figure of the socially promiscuous rhetorician. Cicero realigns these more positively. A chaste style and effective political discourse do not make good partners: *eros* and politics do. In effect, they go together into the makeup of the rhetorical genre.



The discussion of *literary* imitation by rhetoricians (e.g., Dionysius of Halicarnassus, On Imitation, written at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C.) discusses stylistic virtues as a way of judging the adequacy of ancient oratory. And the later work of Hermogenes, On Ideas of Style, foregrounded questions of composition, the choice and use of figures, the ways a model (or different genres) puts together sentences.<sup>20</sup> The question wasn't: "how true is this or that literature," but, as with Quintilian: "what can the prospective public speaker learn from the study of literature" -- Philosophy, here, being a model (or genre) among the great variety of models *within* the category of "literature."<sup>21</sup>

Being (merely) a text, eloquent, and/or persuasive has been one of the central fears and/or bogey men of the western Philosophical tradition. The paradox is that the notion of textuality is not to be trusted precisely when this tradition becomes itself so textual,

---

<sup>20</sup> On the role of these two figures within the lineage of the rhetorical tradition, cf. G. A. Kennedy, The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World: 300 B.C. - A.D. 300, 1972.

<sup>21</sup> Quintilian (Institutio Oratoria, Book 10) combines both Protagoras' recommendation to Socrates to take up literary criticism rather than metaphysics (Protagoras, 1986:72; recall pp. 22 - 23.) and Cicero's view (Orator, 1942:315) that philosophy "helps the orator as physical training helps the actor" -- as practical aid not as substance or essence. In effect, Quintilian recommends philosophical texts within the context of the thorough rhetorical education, under the heading of (Book 10.1) "What to Read." Plato, in Quintilian's context too, is an example of a stylist not a truth-teller, of a literary ally not a metaphysical critic. And having just complimented Plato further under the heading of "kinds of style," he writes: "As for Aristotle, I hesitate to make up my mind whether his fame rests more on his factual knowledge, the number of his works, the charm of his style, the shrewdness of his discoveries, or the variety of his subject matter. . ." (10.1.83; trans., MacKendrick, 1975:355) But whatever the case, Aristotle's importance is not due to his recommendation that the geometry teacher be considered as the model of the good orator. (Recall p. 42ff.)



publication, dependent on the dynamics of writing for its transmission, as its medium of work. For Judeo-Christian rhetoric (to continue the historical story), if persuasion doesn't take place, there is always God to do the work, someone (or something) *external*, a word and object to refer to. Moses said: "I am *not* eloquent . . .:" the only alternative left was miracle. Let God persuade. His "word" is the power required. The metaphysical model for the preacher is then proclamation not persuasion, the rhetoric (of the *presence*) of divine logos rather than the pragmatic rhetoric of the democratic assembly. But the paradoxes and ironies of this position become all the more illuminating in the context of the trajectory of a western tradition which has found it so difficult to look itself in the *rhetorical* face.

The gospels are a curious genre, and not very "literary." Yet Paul's apologetics for them function on the basis of his hellenization, his familiarity with rhetorical practices.<sup>22</sup> So, when accused of philosophical/literary simplicity by the educated in Corinth, he replies: "For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" -- some useful and (unintentionally) ironic oxymorons, which continue, and build up into a metaphysical argument based on paradoxes and reversals,<sup>23</sup> which later develop into the most persistent form of apologetic

---

<sup>22</sup> Cf. R. Bultmann, Der Stil der Paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe, 1910.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. R. Hepburn, Christianity and Paradox, 1968. "Paradox" is a spacious and reasonably generous notion around which Hepburn centers his effort to explain the metaphysical/stylistic requirements of Christian discourse in the context of contemporary philosophy (theology) of language.



rhetoric (perhaps the only conceivable form) in the Judeo-Christian tradition -- outside the sword, anyway.

The point is that the metaphysic most inimical to rhetoricization (Christianity at this stage: the empiricists compete for equal honors later) was propagated in the early church precisely by those (like Tertullian and Augustine) who studied and were professionally employed to teach rhetoric. They used it to denounce it: and their texts *fed on* the tension of the "paradox." Sophisticated allegory, indeed as the *classical rhetoricians* discussed it, became (e.g., with Origen) the chief exegetical ploy (and intellectual pleasure) when needing to interpret and supplement the simplicity of a biblical text: (I am also wishing to allude to the notion of "allegory" as it is developed in the work of

Paul de Man.<sup>24</sup>) In early Christian discourse plenty of neoplatonic rhetoric is employed also in order to elevate, and place within the *safety* of a text, bodily interests and references in a way which is reminiscent of Socrates in the Phaedrus. The point is, again, how fearfully uneasy the recognition of rhetoric made them; and how persistently its power had to be subdued, got *behind*, and equivocated about because of its very usefulness. To wit: the sophistic echoes (and the need to appropriate them) in Gregory of Nazianzus' encomium for Basil, who . . .

"was an orator among orators even *before* the sophist's chair, a philosopher among philosophers even on questions of philosophical theory. And, what constitutes the highest tribute in the eyes of Christians, he was a priest even before the priesthood. In such wise did all defer to him in everything. With him, eloquence was only an accessory, and

---

<sup>24</sup> The allusion to de Man has been interjected for two reasons: 1. He takes up a view of allegory which is an expansion of, but also reiterates, Quintilian's definition -- "any continuous or extended metaphor develops into allegory." 2. The use he makes of this in the context of contemporary literary theory (in Allegories of Reading, 1979) is an attempt to put forward a set of related views about *reading and the rhetoric of reading*. He proposes: that texts function on the basis of root metaphors which acquire coherence and patterns of association in turn by their function in a larger allegory; that the notion of "allegory" emphasizes narrative construction rather than realistic mirroring as the better characterization of our culture's textuality; that the notion of "allegory" encourages the view that one level of reading is not exhaustive or exclusive, but, rather that other readings will be generated and that the reading process will not achieve closure; and this view argues that a non-allegorical description is itself an allegory requiring the extended metaphor of "presence," in terms of which a description could be "verified." One (of the many) implications of these views is that an inquiry into *reading* encourages a shift from thinking that "this represents or means that" to "this is a morally charged, multi-levelled story." And de Man encourages the inference that philosophical texts will usually convey most successfully their root figures (Rationality, Mind, foundational Truth) when these are not themselves probematized or the object of inquiry, but, rather, alluded to obliquely as that which gets the procedure or style off the ground, i.e., when it provides the text's allegorical or narrative coherence. In other words, one could say, vis-à-vis de Man, that the rhetoric against rhetoric provides the allegory of truth with its oblique justification. Cf. also de Man's The Rhetoric of Romanticism, 1984.

he culled from it only what would be helpful for our philosophy, since its *power is necessary* for the exposition of thought. For a mind incapable of expression is like the movement of a paralytic. But philosophy was his pursuit, as he strove to break from the world, to unite with God, to gain the things above by means of the things below, and to acquire, through goods which are unstable and pass away, those that are stable and abide.<sup>25</sup> (My italics.)

In other words, ambitious Christians didn't study the Bible, they went to schools of rhetoric -- Greek institutions sustained by the Romans who saw their practical utility, institutions which found easier "translation" into Roman culture than those of the Dialectical Philosophers'.<sup>26</sup>

But, one final and irresistible example of the conflict between style and *theologizing* style, between speaking through literature and "speaking directly," between having texts and having pure (healthy) and unmediated relations, is Jerome's (ca. A.D. 348-420). He tried, he relates, to exorcise his secular learning, but could not forego his library. He would fast, then rehabilitate himself reading Cicero. Reading the "prophets" and their style revolted

---

<sup>25</sup> Trans. by L. P. McCauley, Funeral Orations by Saint Gregory Nazianzen and Saint Ambrose, 1953:37,38; cited in Kennedy, 1980:144.

<sup>26</sup> I am here sympathizing as an amateur with those professional historians of rhetoric who argue that rhetoric is a centrally important "connective tissue" in "the attainment of civil society in the politics and art of Christian Europe," and especially in its achievement of the Renaissance. (Fumaroli, 1983:253); and who regret that the tradition of rhetoric has generally found no voice in philosophical narratives of the history of western ideas and intellectual style and practice. Cf. James J. Murphy, "One Thousand Neglected Authors: The Scope and Importance of Renaissance Rhetoric," and M. Fumaroli, "Rhetoric, Politics, and Society: From Italian Ciceronianism to French Classicism," in Renaissance Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric, (ed.) J. J. Murphy, 1983.

him, and he'd become ill. While preparation is being made for his funeral, he, in a dying condition, has a vision and is called up before the seat of judgement; and while humbly prostrated, eyes averted, no doubt, from the Great Text (God) about to pronounce his fate, he is asked to state his "condition:" replying that he is a Christian. "You lie" comes the answer. "You are a Ciceronian, not a Christian. 'For where your treasure is there will your heart be also' (Matthew 6:21). Of course Jerome promised thereafter to re-read and rewrite himself: "Lord if I ever have secular books, if I ever read them, I have denied thee." (After having said this he, in his piety, no doubt remembered Saint Peter. He had also promised!)

One allegorical interpretation of this would be that the recognition that one is what one reads (or, things are how they're written) must be avoided at all costs. Yet God's reproach is, of course, nothing more powerful than simply to throw at Jerome a *different* text (Matthew's). The metaphysical dilemma or confrontation between Truth and text is itself a textual drama, and a highly ironic one at that. The devil is a different book, and a rhetorical one at that (Cicero's). The fear of death, (as in Eco's The Name of the Rose), is centered on the fear of a book, on the question of censorship, on the question of which books we are going to fear and/or read, and how we will re-read ourselves and our truths as a consequence. (Augustine is also an instructive example of the same dynamic: He was converted by the rhetoric of Ambrose; whose sign of having been converted by the Logos to the Divine

"Text" was to give up his chair of rhetoric; who nevertheless (in Against Cresconius) sought to offer a *pragmatic* justification of the utility of eloquence; who (in De Doctrina Christiana) makes a significant contribution both to the theory of rhetoric and semiotics, (as well as to the reductively thin neoplatonic tradition of interpretation which associates rhetoric with style, and both with separable formalistic properties which "aid the Message" or content); and who, lastly (in Confessions), founds the genre of "autobiography" -- of *rewriting* one's life to dramatize (through a highly crafted artifice) the "metaphysics" of the converted "soul.")<sup>27</sup>

But rhetoric is nevertheless (despite its persistence in this history) made the useful and ever-present underdog to Dialectic, to having the Truth; as if one got "there" first and acquired language later. But, if rhetoric remains the hidden support to the *possibility* of Dialectic -- from Plato, Aristotle and Augustine through the Middle Ages to the Renaissance -- this is due less to the epistemological "victory" of Philosophy than to the institutional convenience of being able to appeal to the Truth through a medium (an aesthetic) which, through its very use, *acquires* transparency and is not seen as such, as a medium (Gombrich,

---

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Peter Brown, Augustine of Hippo: A Biography, 1969.



1960);<sup>28</sup> and which can thereby acquire enough social/institutional power and authority to enforce its monopoly on Truth-style -- a stylistic invisibility and power upon which the appeal to "Truth" depends. The suppression of rhetoricity in this period is due also perhaps to the threat which public (primary) rhetoric posed to the *caesars* and popes. (Of course, with the advent of the printing press even the "secondary" rhetoric (Reformation writings) of Luther proved threatening to the Pope, to the entire political structure of Europe.)

Rhetoricity was suppressed, this argument runs, up to the point at which the *arts* of the Renaissance, (in conjunction with the practical opportunities for speech), opened up again, and with them the unPhilosophical philosophical tradition of classical rhetoric. In the mediaeval period, in other words, literary

---

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Gombrich, 1960:ch. 4, "Reflections on the Greek Revolution:" What I find interesting here is his use of the concept "schema" in both its worryingly Kantian and its positive rhetorical, aesthetic and pragmatic senses. It is kantian in that an artist's schema is his mental category both within and without the mind. (And I wish to avoid attributing structures to the mind.) It is non-Kantian in the *instrumental* sense reminiscent of Dewey. A schema is *used* by the artist to *persuade* the viewer to enjoy a visual illusion (or, in the context of rhetoric, a linguistic illusion). *Some* schema is necessary to get the process of "representation" going, and one is decided upon in terms of what will best serve the painterly (or philosophical) *purpose*: i.e., it is decided upon rhetorically and pragmatically, but then for some reason concealed, and its relativity hidden. Secondly, Gombrich's reporting of the use of schemata (rhetorics, aesthetic genres) in the 5th-century B.C. awakening of Greek art parallels the flowering of sophism. And this very parallel between the flowering of rhetoric and art is *repeated* in the Renaissance! This willingness to admit the generative power of style and a pluralistic variety of genres (schemata), along with the success of creating new and meaningful art seems more than gratuitous.

Goodman, 1969:71-74, also uses the language of "schemata" to refer to semiotic systems which guide and are guided by tradition, habit and familial relations, not by psychology (in the mind) or "the world" (external objects).



rhetoric persisted as marginalized, in letters, funeral orations, and in poetry,<sup>29</sup> to be codified by monastic scribes and grammarians. It made its reappearance occasionally and dualistically to "mold the tongue," while Philosophy contemplatively "purified the mind." The rhetoric of the 5<sup>th</sup>-century B.C. had been an instrument (as well as a consequence) of social and political change, in a relatively stable urban environment. But, under the supervision of Dialectic and Truth, it was indeed a powerful, public instrument for the preservation of the status quo, and an ornament in the private life of the cloister.

In contrast, the canonical texts of the Renaissance were inseparable from, and can best be interpreted in the context of, the classical rhetorical tradition, both historically and stylistically.<sup>30</sup> That is, (And this is where I want to get to without leaping too quickly and compromising my pretense to offer some historically and pragmatically robust lineage to the rhetorical question), it is in the context of Renaissance humanism where a *rhetorical* understanding of "imitation," (that is, of art, of stylistic invention), expands itself again, where an artistic schema for philosophizing reasserts itself, where civic life provides a practical environment for this plurality to occur, where a forceful and aesthetically regenerative rhetoric makes an appearance from the valley between grammar and Dialectic. (And it is out of this same valley that Dewey's pragmatic rhetoric moves between, (in his

---

<sup>29</sup> On Chaucer as rhetor, cf. J. Murphy, Medieval Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Medieval Rhetoric, 1978:270-87.

<sup>30</sup> G. Kennedy, 1980, argues strongly for the case that Quintilian is a major rhetorical source for the Renaissance.

day), a stream-lined scientistic positivism and grandly inconsequential Metaphysics; as does Rorty, later, move from between the professionalized details of the analytic style, on the one hand, and the larger metaphysical assumptions and exclusions of such a style on the other. Rorty continues to write from *between* Objectivism and Relativism, from between Structure and post-structure, between philosophical disorder and repetition, seriousness and comedy -- and all this without elevating Greek as the only backdrop for such manoeuvres. In other words, the rhetoric of the Renaissance was classicist, as is the historicist rhetoric of Heidegger and Derrida -- Greece always "being" the origin of "proper" Philosophical writing. One of the benefits of the symbiosis of rhetoric and pragmatic humanism, of James, Dewey and Rorty, is their use of the vernacular, and their interest in the practical "pay-off" of Philosophy, in seeing themselves and their province -- its industrial culture and its professionalized discourses -- as having moved somewhat from the Greek city-state. And this seems reasonable to me.)

But in the historical narrative being offered, the Italian humanists were the efficient cause of a revival of aestheticism and rhetoricism, of the re-publication of actual classical texts, of the linking of academic talent to public service, (as secretaries, teachers: Petrarch is the obvious exception.). This is a period in which rhetoric is absorbed into the aesthetics of literary criticism (More on the contemporary re-establishment of this link later.) *and* the pragmatics of coordinating civic and academic contexts.

And it is this balancing act which rhetoric (for two centuries) helped facilitate, and which I wish to continue emphasising. It is a period in which, for example, Trebizond (1395-1472) could write his Introduction of Dialectic which (in the good sophistic philosophical tradition) regarded Dialectic as a "small subject, useful for one entering into the greater field of rhetoric"<sup>31</sup> [where], "with the agreement of the audience insofar as possible, we speak on civic questions."<sup>32</sup> (I am, like Dewey and Rorty, simply wanting to endorse this particular way of construing academic sets and subsets, or, of locating worn-out academic patches in larger social fields.)

This is being narrated not in a spirit of one-upmanship, as a competition *between* Philosophy and literature for the field of Truth, as Danto for example pleads -- a purely representationalist plea. (More on his rhetoric in chapter 6, esp. pp. 268-275.) Rather, rhetoric is the fulcrum from which the pendulum between them swings. Literature and politics, science and Philosophy, from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (e.g., for both Shakespeare and Bacon), acquire a medium, a genre, in the spaces made by rhetoric, through its persistence and place in education.<sup>33</sup> All these forms

---

<sup>31</sup> Recall Quintilian's hope that the orator might "lead philosophy back into the fold of rhetoric." (p. 46)

<sup>32</sup> Cf. J. Monfasani, George of Trebizond: A Biography and a Study of His Rhetoric and Logic, 1976:370-372, and cited by Kennedy, 1980: 202.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Baldwin, William Shakespeare's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke, 1944, for the view that Shakespeare's works are a very concrete embodiment of, if not the greatest achievement of, classical rhetoric. His early education made him not only conscious of the rules and conventions of rhetoric, to which he on occasion directly alludes or satirizes, but he fully utilizes them in his composition "for the highest artistic purpose."

of textuality manoeuvred for position and identity in rhetorical and pragmatic ways, depending upon their purpose. But, not one of them was born without the seeds of rhetoric being implanted in them, without some sense of the artifice and style which in some sense gave them their constitution. If they imitated, they imitated in genres encouraged by a rhetoricized imagination. Even the advent of the empirical, scientific model of discourse required a persuasive rhetoric of presentation and apology: in effect, a ("plain") style.<sup>34</sup> How could new facts, without conversation, without a narrative framework, otherwise acquire a pragmatic/institutional grip on thought and inquiry? In other words, a thick theory of rhetoric (a pragmatic theory) is itself a "theory of communicative action" without transcendentals and Truth (*contra* Habermas, 1982), but with, and encouraging of, a variety of social inquiries and practices (*passim* Dewey and Feyerabend).

#### 2.4 RHETORIC AND THE RISE OF THE "MODERN:"

Bacon is, at this point, the critical link between sophism, empiricism and pragmatism. He was able to talk about old books and new experimentalist instruments in the same text; and a powerful rhetoric of *use* and *function* linked them "for the

---

<sup>34</sup> S. M. Halloran and M. D. Whitburn, argue that when Thomas Sprat polemicizes on behalf of the Royal Society against rhetoric ("Who can behold . . . how many mists and uncertainties these specious *Tropes* and *Figures* have brought on our knowledge."), this can best be read within the context of a *rhetorical* argument and an ideological endorsement of the "plain style." Cf. "Ciceronean Rhetoric and the Rise of Science: Plain Style Reconsidered," in The Rhetorical Tradition and Modern Writing, (ed.) J. J. Murphy, 1982:58-72.



modern world" -- that is, Bacon's world: his project was rather ambitious. This story will concentrate briefly on Bacon's views and uses of rhetoric precisely because he is too often and easily embraced as the great empiricist in a way which fails to contextualize that particular style (empiricism) within his more generally ubiquitous attempt to establish a persuasive *pragmatics* of knowledge, and a rhetoric of social pedagogy. (The story will refer primarily to Book 2, chapter 18, of The Advancement of Learning where rhetoric is most directly discussed.)<sup>35</sup>

"Eloquence prevaieth in an active life . . . [T]he excellency of examples of eloquence as the orations of Demosthenes and Cicero, added to the perfection of the precepts of eloquence, hath doubled the progression in this art . . ." (2.18.1) Rhetoric, for Bacon, is diffused throughout the structure of knowledge, equal to logic because of its great practical utility. It is an art best illustrated (Demosthenes, Cicero) by *political* oratory. (We should remember the importance and power of Bacon's own oratory in the specifically political context of the House of Commons of his day, where, as Johnson said of him: "He commanded where he spoke, and had his judges angry and pleased at his devotion. No man had their affections more in his power. The fear of every man that heard him was lest he should make an end."<sup>36</sup> In other

---

<sup>35</sup> The Works of Francis Bacon (eds.) J. Spedding, R. L. Ellis, D. D. Heath, 1968.

<sup>36</sup> Cited in K. R. Wallace's Francis Bacon on Communication and Rhetoric, 1943:4. Nor is it incidental that a century and a half later the philosophical aesthetics of Edmund Burke's A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas on the Sublime and Beautiful (1757), was also the work of an (eventually) important parliamentary orator, albeit echoing *neoclassical* "ideas" on beauty, passion and love.

words, Bacon goes directly to classical rhetorical sources and to the art and power of political discourse as the glue to a pedagogy of *socially* valuable knowledge.

"[T]he duty and office of rhetoric" [is] "to apply reason to imagination for the better moving of the will" (2.18.2). The concept of imagination is important, and so too moving the will, that is, the audience -- (a more corporate and less individualized "will" than James', as we will see in chapter 3, pp. 112-114). This is to say that *purposiveness* is essential to discursive practice. And the imagination (prior to the more transcendently psychologistic use of it in Kant and Coleridge) is considered as central but *functional* in the suasive endeavor.<sup>37</sup> The "duty" of the endeavor is to "*better*" our practice, or the will. And the strategies employed "ought to *differ* according to the audience" [in order] "to *better inquiry*". (My italics.) This is not an epistemological or ethical reduction of rhetoric in line with Plato and Aristotle but, rather, even somewhat traditional rhetorical

---

<sup>37</sup> Bacon understands the imagination functionally from within experience, whereas Kant understands it as "grounded, antecedently to all experience, upon *a priori* principles." (trans. Norman Kemp Smith, Critique of Pure Reason, 1929) And Coleridge understands the imagination as "the living power and prime agent of all human perception." But, although he appeals to a Kantian idiom of transcendental psychology, Coleridge's remarks should also be seen in the context of his *poetics*. In other words, "what is the imagination?" is illustrated in terms of "what is poetry?". And both are praised for their synthetic, abstractive and transformative power. Unlike Kant's, Coleridge's imagination is "*both* passionate and tranquil," empowered in a proto-Freudian way by something "deeper than consciousness," something partly unconscious. These are moves away from some Kantian sentiments in the direction of a literary and not simply metaphysical context, while nevertheless retaining a primarily psychologistic tenor. (Coleridge citations from excerpts printed in P. H. Werhane's Philosophical Issues in Art, 1984:210-216. Cf. also Mary Warnock's Imagination, 1976.)



apologetics in favor of its positive versatility to open and further various avenues of debate and inquiry. (This has obvious resonances with Peirce and Dewey, for whom the only real sin would be to "block the road of inquiry" with a theory of Truth.)<sup>38</sup>

So, regarding empiricism, the shift "to study nature rather than books" (as Kuhn, 1985:173, puts it) is not a shift from textuality to reality itself, but a shift (as Hacking, 1985:145, puts it) from one "style of reasoning" to another, a shift from one authority to another.<sup>39</sup> "Nature" is coordinated by that style, not by "neutral observation sentences." A style (or scheme, *passim* Davidson, 1973 this time, but still with Gombrich peering through) does not confront reality, it manipulates it, with words, materials, whatever, for certain purposes, to produce certain consequences. If a style of reasoning is "empirical" (and there have been *several* of these styles) it will have its own *internal* criterion (in Putnam's sense) of what constitutes being empirical, of what constitutes an

---

<sup>38</sup> Dewey's reading of Bacon (Reconstruction in Philosophy, 1948:esp. 29-31ff.) centers primarily on Bacon's rubric that "Knowledge is Power," not simply in the classical sense of power over other men or over ideas, to be acquired by syllogistic or Aristotelian deduction, but in the sense (which Dewey calls "modern") that we can have power also over "natural forces." In other words (according to Dewey), Bacon does *not* give us knowledge of "nature" in the form of a method of induction or demonstration, but he "*persuades*" us of the instrumental, practical and social value of manipulating nature over conserving the "knowledge already possessed by canonical texts."

<sup>39</sup> I. Hacking, 1985:146, writes: ". . . I have no doubt that our discoveries are "objective," simply because the styles of reasoning that we employ determine what counts as objectivity. My worry is that the very candidates for truth or falsehood have no existence independent of the styles of reasoning that settle what it is to be true or false in their domain."

object, and what constitutes the larger project and purpose of an inquiry, and where it fits with other inquiries.<sup>40</sup>

Bacon certainly attempted to instrumentalize a vocabulary useful for *describing* events; but he recognized also that a vocabulary *constitutes* and *shapes* facts and events: with a cosmology, with prior views of the "objects of inquiry," with prior views of the "situation of man" who inquires, all riding along too. (This is also Feyerabend's view of Bacon.)<sup>41</sup> Bacon offered a pragmatic rhetoric in service of the new empiricism, as nonclassical as it was neoclassical, as political as it was scientific, a rhetoric of "twisting the lion's tail," that is, of the forceful *intervention* of man,

---

<sup>40</sup> Putnam, 1981:49-50, writes that "the *internalist* perspective . . . hold[s] that *what objects does the world consist of?* is a question that it only makes sense to ask *within* a theory of description. . . 'Truth,' in an internalist view, is some sort of (idealized) rational acceptability -- some sort of ideal coherence of our beliefs with each other and with our experiences *as those experiences are themselves represented in our belief system* -- and not correspondence with mind-independent or discourse-independent 'states of affairs' . . . [or with a] God's Eye point of view." But Putnam does not go the whole rhetorical hog. My reservations are that he attempts to compensate for the loss of the 'external' with a suspiciously neo-kantian appeal to "rational acceptability," to our "natural desire" for a "God's Eye View." And he does this by making somewhat sneaky and empty gestures that will hopefully, by the default of all the old strategies for achieving correspondence, and the *persistence* of such efforts to achieve it nevertheless, leave us with the need to hold onto at least a "theory of rationality" as the next best thing to mere "dialogue." Putnam concludes his book Reason, Truth and History (p. 216) with some very Kantian and ahistorical-sounding refrains: "Does this dialogue have an ideal terminus? Is there a *true* conception of rationality, a *true* morality, even if all *we* ever have are our conceptions of these? . . . The very fact that we speak of our different conceptions as different conceptions of *rationality* posits a *Grenzbegriff*, a limit-concept of the ideal truth." In other words, Putnam concludes without letting us in on just how this *contrast* between "*true* conception" and "all *we* ever have" is to have any *force*, if all *we* ever have is all *we* ever have.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. P. Feyerabend, Against Method, 1978:76.

*inventing* instruments to further the suasive power of a certain genre of inquiry, of writing.<sup>42</sup>

The historical line-up of unScientific philosophers being complimented here begins with the sophists, with Gorgias, who remarked "how astronomers, using "speech and argument" (logos), manage to dispel men's former opinions [about things of the sky and upper air] and to implant other opinions which had formerly seemed incredible and inconsistent with plain facts."<sup>43</sup> Galileo, too, "prevails because of his style and his clever techniques of persuasion, because he writes in Italian rather than Latin, and because he appeals to people who are temperamentally opposed to the old ideas and the standards of learning connected with them." (Feyerabend, 1978:13). He succeeded because he could make up for faulty instruments and "inadmissible" observations with constructive rhetoric. Feyerabend supports this aestheticization of method and the proliferation of ways of talking as an improvement in the range and social flexibility of our inquiries: it is more humanitarian. Nor is it in this regard entirely coincidental that James' Pragmatism and Feyerabend's Erkenntnis für freie Menschen are dedicated to Mill, to the ironic breakdown (as James and Feyerabend pursue it) of Truth in the interest of liberty. In effect, Gorgias and Galileo, James and Feyerabend all link inquiry to successful rhetoric.

---

<sup>42</sup> Even Chomsky, 1972:9, has stylized the epistemological position of natural science, urging the "Galilean style" -- this style being one of what Feyerabend, 1978:73, calls "critical discussion" -- which is also what Rorty means by "conversation."

<sup>43</sup> Cited in Wheelwright, The Presocratics, 1966:250.

The rhetorical litany of names here is more than a grocery list of voices which have chanted rhetoricist slogans for positive pragmatic reasons. It is, I think, a polyphonous force which gets us over the hope that Truth or Science could (or should) stabilize meaning and experience, and present Philosophy with its yearned-for model of propriety and constraint. It is also the momentum which helps shove us over the modernist hump which treats this as a *crisis*, and the "breakdown" as requiring a new le Corbusier-like edifice of Truth which must have no precedent in the tradition being renounced. The pragmatic aesthete looks to wherever he can find some helpful advice: to Gorgias and Cicero, Bacon and Feyerabend, to old constructions and new deconstructions, to scientific texts and to literary texts.

But, (the story continues), after Bacon came the "new logic:" Descartes' Discourse on Method (1667), on the one hand, and Pascal's De l'esprit géométrique (known, interestingly, also as L'Art de persuader) (1664), on the other: "A clash over *rhetoric*" is clear.<sup>44</sup> (And James, in this regard, was persuaded more by the rhetoric of pascalian wagers than cartesian truths as a form of discourse). The new logic claimed without irony that the only sound method of inquiry is that of geometry -- also a neoclassical shadow cast by Aristotle (Recall p. 42.) -- which proceeds from self-evident axioms (of self-representative minds) to universally accepted conclusions -- (a representationalist aesthetic!). Rhetoric

---

<sup>44</sup> Cf. H. M. Davidson, Audience, Words, and Art: Studies in 17<sup>th</sup> Century French Rhetoric, 1965:109-140.

can neither discover nor demonstrate Truth, only further deception. (Of course this polemic is repeating itself -- an emotional reflex which fears the connection between emotion, persuasion, and knowledge-seeking discourses.).

The positive, pragmatic side of the new logic was its power to *create* and establish a new and indeed needed form of communication for the emergence of modern science. But, its denial of its own pragmatics, in order to ground Truth, was also its neglect of the no less powerful discourses of politics and economics involved in this very same (social) emergence of science. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century an interest in logic necessarily involved questions of the province of rhetoric, as much for the Royal Society as for the French Academy. And Locke, who had even lectured on rhetoric (at Oxford in 1663), was equally polemical by the time he wrote An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690). Traditional rhetoric he described as "the Art . . . (and) powerful instrument of Errour and Deceit."<sup>45</sup> What Locke wanted was to exclude figures of speech and rhetorical

---

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Book 3, chapter 10, "Of the Abuse of Words", section 34, "Seventhly, Figurative speech also an abuse of language:" " . . . if we would speak of Things as they are, we must allow, that all the Art of Rhetorick, besides Order and Clearness, all the artificial and figurative application of Words Eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong Ideas, move the Passions, and thereby mislead the Judgment; and so indeed are perfect cheat: And therefore however laudable or allowable Oratory may render them in Harangues and popular Addresses, they are certainly, in all Discourses that pretend to inform or instruct, wholly to be avoided; and where Truth and knowledge are concerned cannot but be thought a great fault, either of the Language or Person that makes use of them. . . 'Tis evident how much Men love to deceive, and be deceived, since Rhetorick, that powerful instrument of Error and Deceit, has its established Professors, is publickly taught, and has always been had in great Reputation:" An Essay concerning Human Understanding, ed. and intro. by P. H. Nidditch, 1979:508.



"devices" from serious discourse, from "pure speech"<sup>46</sup> -- an unfortunate encouragement to that form of philosophy of language which, like Searle, believes it can legislate between two separate (and/or separable) games, "fictional talk" and "real world talk,"<sup>47</sup> the first game being "parasitic upon" the second -- (a mimetic aesthetic!).<sup>48</sup>

Then along came Hume to talk Of Eloquence (1743), noting that "our progress in eloquence is very inconsiderable, in comparison of the advances, which we have made in all other parts of learning." Hume *extends* the growing separation between rhetoric and science by citing a decline in the former (referring narrowly to the showmanship of parliamentary *oratory* like that of a Demosthenes), rather than seeing the latter (science) as indeed the former's advance, as a new and pragmatically successful rhetoric. We now have not a clash over rhetoric but a *separation* of rhetorics. This leaves Hume's essay looking less like a robust theory than a somewhat emasculated medley of obligatory themes of neoclassical and 18<sup>th</sup>-century rhetoric: the achievements of the ancients compared with the English; admiration for the individual orator and the appeal of elocution (but little concern for public consequences); the effect of the new logic on rhetoric (already

---

<sup>46</sup> In an earlier section (Book 3.10.23) Locke summarizes his views on the primary "ends of language:" "First, To make known one Man's Thoughts or Ideas to another. Secondly, To do it with as much ease and quickness, as is possible; and Thirdly, Thereby to convey the Knowledge of Things. Language is either abused, or deficient, when it fails in any of these Three." *Ibid*, p. 504.

<sup>47</sup> Searle, 1969:78.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 325-326.



seeing them as separate -- logic as *opposed* to rhetoric); interest in the sublime, and the identification of grand style with genius (perhaps with envy).

But the consequences of this movement were to elevate a style by *disguising* its rhetoricity, by constructing a model (of logic) to be treated as if it weren't one, as if it weren't a model. With the advent of British empiricism, one now wanted *not* a model of pragmatic rhetoric to analyse the *social* discourse of science, but a science of language for discovering modes of arguing that attach themselves, not, in the end to more language, but to the world itself. The rather hopeful allegory employed, following Locke, was that the *world* wrote directly on the mind before we started speaking (or writing) about it, as if speech would now follow the rules of the world. This pushed the question of rhetoric further into now institutionalized separations, pushing rhetoric into literature (*belles lettres*) and science into *lettres réelles*.

Both Hume and Hugh Blair (Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres,<sup>49</sup> 1783) mention the connection between the need for rhetoric and having affective oratory in a popular form of government, but not the connection between the need for a

---

<sup>49</sup> H. Blair, Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, 2 Vol., ed. & intro., H. F. Harding, 1965. Blair is worth mentioning for two reasons: 1. Blair is a commentator for whom Quintilian is the authoritative figure, and perhaps the last writer for whom this is the case. 2. He is also deserving of mention, not because of any amendment he made to rhetorical theory or practice, but because of his role in sustaining an institutional lineage nearly erased by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Blair's lectures were widely circulated and studied in the U. S. and in Britain, and his work found its way into more than 50 editions of the complete text and at least as many abridgments. Cf. R. M. Schmitz, Hugh Blair, 1948:144-45.

pragmatically effective rhetoric and now having a new language of science to add to it. So, by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the study of, and the pragmatic connection between, Philosophy *and* rhetoric, science *and* rhetoric, the classics *and* rhetoric had drifted apart. In contrast, the movement most sustained by Dewey (beginning toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) is that of trying to philosophize in a way which does not exacerbate these professional and disciplinary separations on the basis of an epistemology which privileges one of them: he, rather, coordinated them. He understood science as the creation of a style of inquiry which creates new and effective opportunities for improved social action and communication; a discourse aestheticized in the sense that it relates to and arises out of social *experience*, not something Transcendent and antecedently True: it contributes a useful artifice to human endeavor which enriches its store of, and application of, "powerful tools *and* enjoyed meanings." It was, for Dewey, an art (like architecture) which persists as both theoretical *and* practical, rhetorical *and* political, useful *and* fine.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps somewhat homely sentiments, but certainly more modern than mimetic, in continuity with a nonDialectical tradition of rhetoric which foregrounded the construction of an improved artifice for achieving a desired purpose; and not in continuity with the fixed patterns of the artisan -- such an important model for the social stability sought

---

<sup>50</sup> Dewey: 1929b (1958:258). (These points and pragmatic relations will return, for example, in the rhetoric *and* rhetoricity of post-modern architecture, as James Stirling will build it, and as Charles Jencks will comment upon it. Cf. chapter 6, esp. pp. 240-241.)

and consecrated by the Philosophy of Plato.<sup>51</sup> So, it is to the rhetoric of Dewey's contemporaries, to their ambivalent contributions to the pragmatization of Philosophy and to the role the aesthetic plays in this process, that I now turn.

---

<sup>51</sup> Dewey, in Reconstruction in Philosophy, 1948:94, writes: "In the social arts, such a radical reformer as Plato felt that existing evils were due to the absence of such fixed patterns as controlled the productions of artisans. The ethical purport of philosophy was to furnish them, and when once they were instituted, they were to be consecrated by religion, adorned by art, inculcated by education and enforced by magistrates so that alteration of them would be impossible." (Whereas Dewey implied, rightly I think, that we can reverse this relation and appeal to the paradigmatic changes in the arts as a criticism of this form of philosophizing: there are no fixed patterns: not for the arts, and not for a philosophy which refers to them.)

### 3.1 PHILOSOPHY AND PRAGMATIC WRITING:

Having attempted to lead the empirical, physical "sense" of modern science up to its own rhetoricity and textuality, and having attempted to lead the metaphysical "Truth" of Dialectic down to its, another short story is required to add a narrative link between them both and the more local history and rhetoric of pragmatism. "Narrative," here, is used in its confessedly sloppy sense. Local histories aren't in a position to guarantee or ground necessary causal relations between persons, events, and texts. Nor are they privileged enough to be able to preserve some "identity" between past, present and future work. Nor would Dewey (nor Rorty, for that matter) encourage us to keep telling histories if they become a "polishing [of old] tools" as the primary justification for keeping them.<sup>1</sup> But finding a story-teller's art that can include history and avoid what Dewey called "chewing a historic cud" implies using a genre of writing which is more difficult to practice than to talk about the theory which encourages such practice.<sup>2</sup> To avoid nostalgic reminiscence and

---

<sup>1</sup> Dewey, 1916 (1966:328). For "Rorty's Use of Dewey" in this regard cf. J. Campbell, 1984:175-187.

<sup>2</sup> "Under such circumstances (writes Dewey) there is danger that the philosophy which tries to escape the form of generation by taking refuge under the form of eternity will only come under the form of a bygone generation. To try to escape from the snares and pitfalls of time by recourse to traditional problems and interests: -- rather than that let the dead bury their own dead. Better it is for philosophy to err in active participation in the living struggles and issues of its own age and times than to maintain an immune monastic impeccability, without relevancy and bearing in the generating ideas of its contemporary present." Dewey, "Does Reality Possess Practical Character?," 1908; cited in McDermott (ed), The Philosophy of John Dewey, 2 Vol. 1981:xlili.

repetitive self-parody implies the use of an historicist artifice which attempts to make a virtue of unrepresentational writing, enjoying the somewhat troubling and irresolvable tension between its respect and its manipulation -- its impious fidelity to things past.

In order to begin writing about pragmatic writing, let us retrieve again Dewey's writing about reading the writing of Plato:

"Plato's generation would, I think, have found it difficult to class Plato. Was he an inept visionary or a subtle dialectician? A political reformer or a founder of the new type of literary art? Was he a moral exhorter, or an instructor in an Academy? Was he a theorist upon education, or the inventor of a method of knowledge? We, looking at Plato through the centuries of exposition and interpretation, find no difficulty in placing Plato as a philosopher and in attributing to him a system of thought. We dispute about the nature and content of this system, but we do not doubt it is there. It is the intervening centuries which have furnished Plato with his technique and which have developed and wrought Plato to a system."

His reading of Plato (while writing about Emerson) was to allude to an aesthetic-philosophical tradition which blurs professionalized distinctions, which uses a style and a vocabulary operative in more than one disciplinary space, which loosens itself as a text from the merely exegetical function of reminiscing about other and older "Philosophical" texts (James, too, was his precedent here.). His point was not to construct (label, or read) a text as if it *must* be a "metaphysical, epistemological, or ontological" one -- implying privileges which transcend cultural locality; it was to read a text pragmatically, as a critical



contribution to its cultural milieu, a milieu which always included non-Philosophers.

This sort of philosophical writing is, in Dewey's texts, a part of the aesthetic, i.e., an art; in that it is a medium for making, not for mirroring (or otherwise losing itself in transparency). It doesn't reflect (epistemologically), it stylizes (purposefully), "integrating means and ends." This means, generally, that in our "doings and undergoings" in different social domains there is always a large amount of style, of artifice and craftiness. Specifically regarding the philosophical medium, style is an historical conglomeration of rhetorical devices for arguing and/or ridiculing, elevating and/or effacing interests which discourses carry (or pretend not to carry) around with them. For Dewey, the aesthetic is a "category" which can be more *or* less tight, more *or* less rigorous, more *or* less metaphorical, but never closed or absolute. It is an "interacting mode" in all domains of human discourse which doesn't justify privileging any one of them, or its users, or their style for organizing the "world."

Dewey's metaphors or figures could be biological and organic: He was born in the same year as Darwin's Origin of Species was published, was keen on Huxley, and preferred the language of "organic interaction" to that of metaphysical "essence" or "foundation." The organic was the indispensable *medium* of our most crude and cherished cultural transactions -- economic and aesthetic -- but not a determinative foundation for them. It could



not guarantee any form of knowledge (high or low); but it might help habituate some which worked. Our "biology" was a dynamic membrane in and out of which different forms of knowledge (ingrown or not) could pass.

It was through Darwin (*the* point of controversy in turn-of-the-century metaphysics in American Philosophy) that Dewey attempted to construct a developmental, pragmatic logic, rather than offer a beleaguered defense of an already out-moded religion -- a defense which preoccupied Harvard Philosophy, engendered a great deal of superfluous fervor, offered very tenuous consolation, and which Dewey simply bypassed as reactionary.

Darwin encouraged a shift from the imagery of and preoccupation with static absolutes and essences to an interest in specific transitions and processes, to a vocabulary interested in articulating *changes* which served (or hindered) concrete purposes. What Dewey extrapolated was a concrete functionalism which could leave the Absolute in Europe or Harvard with the idealists and transcendentalists: while he attempted to outline a philosophical language which would register and investigate the socio-natural conditions which encouraged and/or allowed for the *generation* of a wider plurality of levels -- levels of concrete and "functionally beneficial interactions," operative in different domains of human activity, discussable in different genres of writing.

In other words: No one theory of Causality; no single determinative Substance; no Peircean "long run" which teleologically guaranteed direction and the eventual cosmological conversion of all inquiry; no Roycean Absolute to oversee the process. For Dewey, Darwin and the notion of "experimentation" were combined (along with the persuasive help of James) as a strategy for avoiding this legacy. They combined to encourage a rhetorical and pragmatic shift which gave philosophy something else to do, and a style of reasoning with which to do it.<sup>3</sup>

But Dewey's philosophy of nature was also, and at the same time, an anthropological story: He was influenced by the work of George Herbert Mead, and saw analytic and investigative discourses as cultural practices, as elliptical embodiments of social interests and relations, as epistemologically *interested*, therefore, in the dynamics of human experience. Man might not be the measure of all things, but it was this practical/social anthropos who needed to do the measuring. Hence, his language would always be committed to historical and political metaphors -- the non-theological side of Hegel which Dewey never forgot, and in terms of which a positivist vision of knowledge was not possible. The more specific historical location of the normative and evaluative political vocabulary he used was in the socially critical/ameliorative side of democratic liberalism, on the one hand, and in a pragmaticized Marxism, on the other. What linked this political imagery with his scientific (empirical) imagery was

---

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Dewey, The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy: And Other Essays in Contemporary Thought, 1910:1-19.

his praise and apologetics for "experiment." He conceived of this as a general virtue over which science had no monopoly, but some instructive success; a virtue which implied that not all was well, that things could be done better, and that "experiment" (political, scientific, artistic) was the most open, creative and responsive way to proceed in order to coordinate these different discourses, and to prevent any one of them from becoming an epistemological bully. "Experimentation" was a strategy *and* a figure in the sense that its use in science did not constitute a specific methodological discovery procedure of the antecedently real which could be adopted elsewhere. It was an attempt institutionally to habituate good styles of intellectual work.

Dewey's metaphors, as part of his pragmatic strategy of writing, were also ubiquitously aesthetic. His precedents, Emerson and Whitman, were democrats, philosophers and poets for whom discursive walls didn't exist, or shouldn't in any absolute sense. Such walls were written and could be unwritten. With a little finesse, language from different institutional domains (the literary, the scientific, the philosophical) did not translate one into the other so much as, by juxtaposition, loosen and disrupt the consolidation of any one vocabulary constructed in technical and social isolation from the others. Dewey's sustained subtext was always aesthetic in that the worlds with which vocabularies coped were cultural artifacts not positivist discoveries, and *experienced* by their users not verified *outside* of that culture's experience. When the aesthetic meant the arts more specifically, then the

material media used, and the social context and performance traditions within which these "objects" were made and experienced, did not form an autonomous domain, untouched by or unable to touch other social practices to which they might not "refer" directly. Art objects (like philosophical texts) were specific efforts at giving form, at shaping and/or criticizing an accepted form or shape given to bits of our world. But, by virtue of being activities, they were not passive mirrors or imitators.

And, finally, Dewey's larger allegories were primarily pedagogical, (in the *rhetorical* tradition of Bacon, British empiricism, and Scottish Common Sense philosophy -- a more productive set of texts (for James too) in the development of pragmatism than the neo-kantianism which absorbed Peirce and Royce). Dewey's interest in education was both philosophical and programmatic. He thought that experience was pedagogical in that we made worlds, and organized discourses to cope with them, and hopefully to do so in way which would offer more benefits and stability than whatever had previously been tried. Being programmatic was an extension of a philosophy of experience which sought to institutionalize and better secure the training of those procedures deemed most productive of our relative "successes at coping." (It was, interestingly, a somewhat crude reception of Dewey's voluminous work on education which, in Scotland, fueled James Darioch's (and other Scottish teachers' and socialists') attempts to reform the entrance requirements of Scottish Universities; which fueled the 1920's controversies over the function of the university

and of philosophy within it; which helped frame the question as to whether university education served primarily socially valuable and practical or elitist and anachronistic functions; which led also to John Anderson's criticisms of Dewey in defense of a curious mixture of traditional educational classicism and Calvinist authoritarianism as a justification of the status quo.)<sup>4</sup> Dewey thought that an interest in learning motivated any relevant form of intellectual work, that explicit and systematic contribution to pedagogy was a necessary dimension to such work, and a good reason for doing the literary/critical work called philosophy.

Hence, (and back to our primary focus) Dewey's deprofessionalized rigor dedramatises the distinction between Philosophy and Literature, epistemology and interpretation. What his (somewhat) "modernist," constructive conscience and Rorty's "postmodernist" irony ask is: Are Philosophical texts perhaps grandiloquent but provincial artifacts talking too big (as in Heidegger); or big lumps of social relations talking too tough (as the Nietzschean Foucault interprets things); or too-tough-to-read lumps of etymological professionalism talking (albeit) critically (as in Derrida); or are such texts more modest but hopeful lumps of interdisciplinary sentences which are no longer holding out for the honor and authority of would-be universal Truths? Dewey's art seems to be the latter.

---

<sup>4</sup> Cf. G. Davie, The Crisis of the Democratic Intellect, 1986, who reads Anderson more sympathetically, and the institutionalization of a Philosophy which stands by its privileges to pronounce on "first principles" more generously.



For those who want rigor, it can, or course, be a good thing. But it presupposes a discursive style already shared (and hence a standard of rigor being accredited by a community). The problem being when the question of which or how many discourse(s) to use is unsettled, each offering a different resonance, with different "empirical" concerns, techniques, cultural histories and stylistic conventions. (This is the question Feyerabend celebrates.) In the aesthetic context, rigor, considered analytically or otherwise, is not a meta-category by which all domains can be compared, nor a general principle kept externally aside for reasons of objective measurement. (Wasn't this Harold Osborne's hoped-for frame of reference for Criticism?). It is, rather, a rhetorical gesture made in favor of those discourses we find already operative, illuminating, and sophisticated, a functional compliment paid to particular forms of notation and communication and their semiotic *use* (Goodman) -- be those uses "scientific" or "artistic," be the unit of interest a Searly, domineering sentence or speech act, or a Derridean story, a more homely narrative by non-analytic Dewey or a witty one by post-analytic Rorty.

We narrate and criticize ourselves through stories (big ones like Christianity and small ones like Camus's "Fall" from the grip of this big one), through constructing experiments, institutions, and industries, through the brute and the beautiful. We narrate through paintings which picture, notes which compose, through garden, town, and architectural planning which organizes, through

films and photos which summarize and/or freeze bits of social experience being attended to, broken up and/or given form.<sup>5</sup> As rather versatile and needy organisms we feed from all these domains. So, the question of which proposition to assert, or picture to look at, note or narrative to listen to, criticize and/or promote are all questions not about what is epistemologically True or dialectically false. These are questions about what will help us get what we want and about what we *should* want, and (for Dewey) about which deconstructive and *reconstructive* practices would improve the odds.

One such improvement would be to recognize philosophical practice as itself aesthetic, that it is itself *writing* (Derrida).<sup>6</sup> And (as Dewey said about Plato) it is a way of *reading* texts. The classification of the poet as the man of metaphor and the philosopher as the man of objective Truth, of the noun, is a classification internal to a rhetoric and an institution. The oppositions, Truth *or* rhetoric, objectivity *or* metaphorical sophistry, are *products* of a Philosophical rhetoric. They beg the question and encourage the philosopher not to learn what it is he does (i.e., write), nor aesthetically to understand his own artifice and *read* it accordingly. (More about what sort of "reading" is meant here also in chapters 4 and following.) Aestheticizing the

---

<sup>5</sup> These very different modalities of "narrative" are being blurred together simply to indicate their similarities as aesthetic and non-foundational, and to indicate that the notion of "narrative" is being used metaphorically to refer to these domains in a non-ontologically privileging discourse.

<sup>6</sup> More on the relationship between pragmatism and the work of Derrida in chapter 5, esp. pp. 195-231.

text and foregrounding the role of the *interested* reader in the reception of the text is part of what it is to read pragmatically.

On the reading side, this is just to say that there are different pragmatic reasons for, and ways of, reading a text. Philosophers have tended *not* to read for images, figures and a plurality of possible stories. They have dreamt of frisking the metaphors and figures for an argument, a clear proposition, a truth, for a naked noun upon which our semantic constructions must be referentially parasitic -- (a traditional manoeuvre engendered by Aristotle, according to both Dewey and Derrida; a manoeuvre which wants to read-off essences and write more than a helpful story, with the use of more than the latest functioning metaphor). The *epistemic* dualism (noun/metaphor, truth/fiction) having been accepted, the task is to weed out and convert the latter to the former -- (it having *been* there, hiding underneath all the time). (This pastiche will acquire some details in chapter 4, as will a defence of pastiche in chapter 6.)

Dewey, when writing philosophy, had no specifically detailed analytic technique for separating out true from false sentences, asocial and innocent nouns from dubiously infected metaphors. He had no dualism separating poetics from philosophical propositions. Nor did he have a prose whose generality occupied any position of ontological privilege (or harbored an Austinian desire to find a descriptive jurisprudence by which to clean up (make "clear") his ordinary language). There wasn't anything

called Philosophy in these senses, and no *general* "problem of knowledge" as its basis; no single set of practices; no single stylistically orthodox institution of great texts. A *curriculum* could provide some historical order and professionally encourage a way of reading and writing: But Dewey's pragmatism, as a style of reading and writing, could not avoid interacting with the literature of other cultural domains, (political, scientific, and aesthetic), be it Emerson or Einstein -- both of whom he wrote about.

"Language" becomes, therefore, not only (from the philosophical canon) a Wittgensteinian inquiry, but also (for example) a Joycean and Nabakovian one. And our semiotic practices and institutions involve not only language and *its* conventions; they involve also the power of the image (e.g., of photography, painting, film), of the acoustic (e.g., of music), and the power of other social media which make our worlds. The "aesthetic" is a reminder that these worlds we *experience* not primarily as philosophical/ epistemological knowers (with a fully formed Subject in a free-standing relationship to a fully formed world). We become made and corporately do some of the remaking for reasons often experientially and ideologically camouflaged by theories of Truth and Knowledge. Talk of art and aesthetic experience is (for Dewey) talk about how we embody and transmit, criticise and aid, through different socio-material conventions (like the writing of philosophy) some of these interests and knowledge-producing inquiries.

So, Dewey's local style was not raised to a principle in itself. It hadn't that forbidden taste of subversion, or the texture of the overwoven and Derridean -- (a style nevertheless rightly critical of the cartesian Subject being in full, conscious, disembodied control of the written work; and rightly suspicious of standard philosophical conventions of reading and writing which have predominated in the mainstream institutional (especially analytic) canon). Dewey's occasionally homely and hard-working New England style was etymologically less professional, but easier to read. His models were not the eccentricities of a de Sade or Artaud, used as grand theatrical metaphors of Western dissent from *the* "Tradition," as Derridaean figures supporting the search for romantic and marginalized moments of resistance (failed resistance) to the "Whole of Western discourse."<sup>7</sup> (Failed, of course: For how could they escape what by definition is the "Whole" of discourse?)

Dewey's art was more mundane. He rather liked and respected the ordinary. He had a rural evenness and humanist hopes which were reflected in his style. The contrast between philosophy and

---

<sup>7</sup> On Artaud as a metaphor of dramatic resistance to "Western" discourse, cf. "The Theater of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation," Writing and Difference, Bass, A., (trans., Intro.), London, 1981. (More recently Derrida has remained loyal to the idea that, with respect to writing, . . . "it can be presumed that it is a matter of the whole of the tradition . . ." This philosophical rubric is still of the grand, Heideggerian sort. But, regarding this rubric (and Heidegger), Derrida also shows his characteristic mixture "of responsibility and disrespect," his "filial impiety.") Cf. "An Interview With Derrida," in Derrida & Difference, Wood & Bernasconi (eds.), 1985:124,125. (interview by Catherine David for le Nouvel Observateur, 1983.)



literature was institutional not epistemological, treated not as a basis for another grand theory about the structure (or post-structure) of *all* discourse (Of Grammatology).<sup>8</sup> It was a question of preference. The contrast did not refer to one monolithic conspiracy to erase the metaphor (Derrida's diagnosis), nor to two separable (epistemological) worlds of truth (Danto's dais);<sup>9</sup> it referred, rather, to two different bibliographies. Their respective textual industries and social uses might vary. But that variance does not make one a "Fach" and the other family of texts suspicious deviants from what is "true in all *possible* worlds."<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Derrida, J., De la grammatologie, Minuit, 1967; Engl. Trans., Of Grammatology, 1976.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Danto's "Philosophy as/and/of Literature," 1985. Danto's energetic homily to the would-be Truth, as the goal of philosophy, is a call to those hopefuls who remain staunchly worried that the Fellows-after-Truth (philosophers) must be careful not to keep bad literary-theoretical (textualist) company.

<sup>10</sup> More on Danto's rhetoric in chapter 6. My point at the moment is to setup briefly Dewey's understanding of the pragmatics of writing in a "philosophical" genre.

### 3.2 EARLY TENSIONS OF PRAGMATIC WRITING:

We need some narrative reference again to history, to Dewey's most important contemporaries, to fill in further the pragmatists' picture. They intermittently made reference to the aesthetic, to the rhetoricity of pragmatism itself; but they wanted to hold onto beliefs beyond its relativizing reach. James realized this and *wagered* in favor of the sort of (religious) belief that his own irony would have prevented him from trying to ground. So, James (along with Emerson -- who is later revived by Rorty, Bloom and Cavell) is an important stylistic precedent. It is his *prose* which expresses a pragmatic aesthetic. (Although it is surprising that his own training as a painter and involvement in the literary theoretical debates of his day did not lead to more detailed remarks on rhetoric, aesthetics and the arts as an alternative to science as a paradigm for pragmatizing the Philosophical genre.) Royce too wrote about the pragmatic while clinging to an Absolute which oversees. Peirce outlined a semiotic pragmatism while clinging to Foundationalist dreams which it could never support. All three wanted a religious subtext along with a proliferation and extension of strategies of inquiry under the aegis of the new sciences. Pragmatism, they hoped, would allow them both worlds.

What aligned even their disagreements was a defense of conventional Bostonian "spiritual" values, while nevertheless shifting to define belief as a "habit of action" rather than some abstruse mental phenomenon. The category of "habit," they

hoped, would get them past Descartes, and be able to do service for the need to hold old values *and* sponsor new habits of inquiry and scientificity. An interest in logic was the predominant instrument for attempting to formalize these habits -- except for James. But there are also important institutional dynamics which encouraged this pragmatist genre of writing to develop in certain ways.

Logic, science, and the growth of the universities combined to push for a particular form of professionalization; and this meant:

1. the disappearance of the amateur philosopher, the writer/thinker without institutional affiliation, salary and related administrative responsibilities.
2. the beginning of a discipline of philosophy circumscribing a limited field of knowledge in the university, distinguished less by an interest in public culture than by a preoccupation with special techniques and a conventionally accepted set of social doctrines.
3. the growth of departmentalism and the concomitant economic politics which define disciplinary integrity and value in terms of the number of positions in a specified field the university would finance, and the number of publications any one member would amass.
4. And this form of professionalization meant a grooming of, and placing of, teachers in this field by a competitively intensified

apprenticeship, leading to the doctorate and a lectureship -- (one hoped).<sup>11</sup>

The point being broached at the moment is that these institutional dynamics carried with them aesthetic questions and consequences. On the back of these dynamics rode questions relating to a change in written style, its relationship to an envisaged audience, and how differences in style were to be received and judged. For example, the popular idiom of James and the ministerial idiom of Royce have often detracted from their reputations; while Peirce's technical and metaphysically anomalous idiom has often added to his. And Whitehead's mixture of technical, oracular, ministerial and cosmological genres has often hurt his. Style, along with other interests, is a criterion employed in such judgements, but usually without being made explicit or receiving detailed comment; probably because it carries no objectivist credentials, and privileges no particular form of argument. It has seemed better to deny the constitutive dimension of style in striving for trustworthy reference (to objects and/or texts) than admit its relativity. Nevertheless, the *institutionalization* of a distinctly philosophical expertise seemed to encourage the historical shift to symbolic logic and epistemology as core genres of the discipline; and with this came the decline of a public philosophical idiom (of rhetoric, in the

---

<sup>11</sup> Cf. L. Veysey's The Emergence of the American University, 1965, for an excellent account of the role the development of the university played in the rise of departmental disciplinarianism. And B. Kuklick's The Rise of American Philosophy concentrates more specifically on the rise of the philosophical profession between 1860 and 1930 in view of the social context of the university.

classical sense) and the pursuit of non-professional interests. How one earned a salary became increasingly disjointed from how one lived.

My direction in this section will be toward Rorty on his way out the other end of this history of professionalization; which means: after writing a treatise on analytic accomplishments and their pragmatic consequences,<sup>12</sup> he returns to essays,<sup>13</sup> to embracing the cosmopolitan amateur who doesn't *know* the conditions of knowledge: After a period of technical professionalization, he returns as the edifying kibitzer and sophistic story-teller, finding his venue in the public conversations of a board of interdisciplinary intellectuals: After the discipline of Philosophy has exhausted its role as adjudicator of knowledge claims, in terms of a limited set of questions about "language," he returns to art as the paradigm, to the unPrincipled writer,<sup>14</sup> the producer not of total systems but of texts, of artifacts. He encourages a post-Philosophical rhetoric which lets "a thousand flowers bloom."

Dewey is between these alternatives: The philosopher is the generalist, but the stakes involved in his contribution (or lack of) are high: The form his work takes is indeed not primarily of any one sort -- he writes books, articles in professional journals, and journalistically for newspapers; he is indeed on the board of intellectual conversationalists, but also on the board of the

---

<sup>12</sup> Rorty, Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, 1979.

<sup>13</sup> Rorty, The Consequences of Pragmatism, 1982, and elsewhere.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Rorty's "Philosophy without Principles," 1984a.



teacher's union, and the chairman of the Committee of Inquiry investigating the Moscow trials of Trotsky in Mexico City:<sup>15</sup> His textual products are not in service of writing a System of First Principles or of providing the epistemological structures of knowledge, but he does concentrate on the public, social and macroscopic powers which effect how easy or difficult any one flower finds it to bloom.

Two *amateur* precedents for the rise of this style also need to be mentioned. Firstly Emerson: He was not an expository thinker. His speculative products were a function of eloquence, not of a System or a proof. His was a textual nominalism of aesthetic/moral objects, the literary/philosophical pursuits of a man of independent means. Secondly: the "Metaphysical Club" of the 1870's: Of its six core members, three were lawyers, practical men who wanted to see concepts in *operation*, coming out of and relating more to human action than to "a method of reflection," more to behavior than to speculation (Recall the juridical background of the sophists.). They sought to naturalize "mind" (in the context of Darwin and Descartes, remember) and view thought as intentional and functional. Participation in this milieu is in part what led Peirce to his "pragmatic maxim:" without evidence of noumenal objects, it was verbiage to argue that they must be there to ground certain experiences.

---

<sup>15</sup> In 1937, at the age of 78, Dewey was the chairman in Mexico City of the Commission of Inquiry into Charges Made Against Leon Trotsky in the Moscow Trials, and highly praised for his skill in this position. He was also the founder and first president of the American Association of University Professors.

### 3.3 PEIRCE, THE UNEASY RHETORICIAN:

It would be a difficult strain to narrate Peirce's work in a way which made it tidy and consistent. Between Peirce's persistent search for a grounded System and the inconsistencies internal to that search, there sneaks in a somewhat disruptive notion of the aesthetic, all the more so for being a parenthetical interest which rests uneasily on the margins of his work, to be called upon when the acquisition of Truth requires some imagination -- (More on this following.). Peirce's grand Systematic project and his concrete contributions to pragmatist semiotics, his attempt to extend the categorical absoluteness of Kant and the common-sensism of Reid, are all uneasily combined in a Peirce who was part scholastic puritan and turn-of-the-century Bostonian, writing in a variety of idioms which are, even for the sympathizer, difficult to disentangle (or blur in a way which is to his credit).

He sought a theory of *a priori* universal categories, a foundational role for mathematics, and a *substantive* definition of truth which could, on the other hand, be phenomenologically and experimentally verified. But he could never cover all of the metaphysical loans he took out to generate and support the systematic whole he wished to provide. The axis upon which one can turn Peirce's work is his "Kantian fusion of idealist and realist themes" in an attempt holistically "to place all human

experience"<sup>16</sup> -- an attempt on the one hand to make man himself a sign and a user of signs (a rhetorician), and on the other, to make him the knower of the nature of all true signification (a Dialectician).

Most of Peirce's output is in some way about the semiotic, about the inquirer, about "representation," and about the languages used to elicit the world. (And this (Peirce's semiotic) seems to me to be his implicit aestheticization of representation, of reference, of a philosophy which investigates these questions.) More specifically, his semiotic is a theory of thought (and mind), a detailed theory of inference, and a theory of the "nature" of the signs we use for both. The ambition is to ground the links between realistic representation and convention, between the object and the "interpretant" as managed by different types of signification. What Peirce attempted was to outline the "ultimate aims of inquiry," and to do so through a theory of categories "discovered (from his) study of signs."<sup>17</sup>

To say that "all thought whatsoever is a sign"<sup>18</sup> was a way of overthrowing cartesian intuition (a job which the Structuralists will reinforce), of eliminating one "non-sign" candidate that might have contributed to thinking. And elaborating the sign rather than the intuition eliminated also its corollaries: introspection, universals, and other occult entities now deemed simply

---

<sup>16</sup> C. Hookway, 1985, develops this account.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Peirce, Collected Papers, 2:227-306.

<sup>18</sup> Peirce, Collected Papers, 6:421.

unnecessary. What took over mental self-doubt was inquiry and scientific doubt: for, "doubt was an irritation, a stimulus to action; doubt was a struggle to reach the reposeful state of belief, and this struggle [is] called inquiry." Then follows the dig at Descartes: "the mere putting of a proposition into the interrogative form does not stimulate the mind to any struggle after belief. There must be a real and living doubt, and without this all discussion is idle."<sup>19</sup>

And this pushed Peirce toward his pragmatic theory of meaning: "Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object."<sup>20</sup> In other words, Peirce needed science, and, therefore, he needed to get past Hume's skepticism about induction. He needed realism, and Kant's help to make this compatible with religion -- with *moral* belief.<sup>21</sup> But, to hope that we would through inquiry *achieve* realism led to a communal *idealism* to prop up the hope that we (the community of inquirers -- scientists being the paradigmatic community) would indeed eventually get "there:"

For, "[t]he real . . . is that which, sooner or later, information and reasoning would finally result in, and which is therefore independent of the vagaries of me and you. Thus, the very origin of the conception of reality shows that this conception essentially involves the notion of COMMUNITY without

---

<sup>19</sup> Peirce, "Illustrations of the Logic of Science," in Popular Science Monthly, 1878, Cited by B. Kuklick, 1979:118.

<sup>20</sup> Peirce, Collected Papers, 5:402.

<sup>21</sup> Kant's Critique of Pure Reason was certainly Peirce's sacred text, to which he devoted three hours per day for two years in a penitential attempt to master it. I admire the patience.

definite limits, and capable of a definite increase of knowledge."<sup>22</sup>

To get to the real, Peirce required a theory of the "outward clash" -- that which would connect perception, cognition and belief, in order to establish the relation between "the credible" and "the fallible," the real and the interpreted, and to connect the particular and the general as they were brought together, according to Peirce, in the sensory character of experience, i.e., through the "outward clash." Peirce's problem is in developing a theory of inquiry which would consult the clashed-with world *and/or* one's inquiring fellows in the "regulative hope" that the same abstract ("natural") laws would govern the convergence of both domains. He wanted two rhetorics eventually to collapse back into one: he wanted the discourse of constructing, making and using (signs), once let out of the bag, to collapse back into the discourse of discovering permanent and substantial Truth from the point of view of God.

To account for this collapsing in service of the growth of knowledge, Peirce made recourse to a theory of induction and "abduction." "Quantitative" and "qualitative" induction were the tests of knowledge. Abduction decided what was *worth* testing. And the "proper" use of both were meant to ensure the eschatological "convergence of opinion," that is, if we test long enough. For Peirce, induction involved "sampling," the long-run optimism that we would succeed, and a belief that the principle of

---

<sup>22</sup> Peirce, Collected Papers, 5:311.



self-correction inhered in the process.<sup>23</sup> Objectivity, then, would be achieved due to the "altruistic" and "disinterested" (Kant again) inquisitiveness with which the *rationaly* inspired imagination has (especially in mathematics) always proceeded. One can here (as elsewhere) easily detect the progressivist cosmology always creeping into even the most analytically detailed of Peirce's analyses. In an attempt to square a highly rationalist metaphysic with the "critical commonsensism" of Scotland then taken up in Harvard, Peirce ends up appealing to the vague and occult grandeur of evolutionary explanations.

And all of this Peirce attempted to hold together under the one rubric: "pragmatism." He wanted to be pragmatic *and* to hold out for verificationist proof of his metaphysical realism, to be pragmatic *and* hold on to an uncompromised religiosity. Pragmatism (or "pragmaticism"<sup>24</sup>) was to be a rule-following technique for unpacking specific propositions *and* an arbiter of the general laws of the universe. It was to provide an "objectively correct system of classifications" while appealing to a rhetoric of metaphysical belief for constitutional support which was far from the level of objective proof. Peirce wanted philosophy to find support from the *a priori and* the experimentalist, to share the thoughts of God *and* those of the selfless and contrite

---

<sup>23</sup> According to Lauden, 1981, this is standard 19<sup>th</sup>-century rhetoric about the nature of science -- and Peirce certainly indulged in it.

<sup>24</sup> In order to retain his authority over the conception of the "pragmatic" and keep it out of the "literary clutches" (primarily of James), Peirce made a curious appeal to the "ethics of terminology" as a justification of his rights to the notion; and he then coined the word "pragmaticism," which he thought would be "ugly enough to be safe from Kidnappers." Collected Papers, 6:414.

observational inquirer, linked holistically by one grand evolutionary semiotic. Peirce, in effect, wanted to deal only with "problems capable of investigation by the observational methods of the true sciences:" yet, to fill in the gaps, he held on to an evolutionary belief in a world which "becomes an absolutely perfect, rational and symmetrical system in which mind is at last crystalized in the infinitely distant future"<sup>25</sup> -- It is theology which we observe here.

Such were the historical and methodological sentiments which, in the figure of Peirce, got a pragmatic rhetoric off the ground, but handed it back to the dreamy world of the Dialectician. Peirce indeed denied that reality is wholly determinate, that there is a reality corresponding to every question, (or style of questioning), that might arise. But he did not consider, therefore, that there was no *one* genre of writing which could line up the ones that do "correspond," or adjudicate and exclude those that do not. If there is no determinate reality, then it is not *reality* which determines or constrains the nature of the signs we use (the structuralists, too, will suggest); nor will it determine a single genre -- defined as literary *or* scientific -- which is to count as truly Philosophical (the post-structuralists, too, will suggest).<sup>26</sup> "Real" questions are real conventions generated by and satisfied by the genres within which they are constructed and institutionalized. And these are assessed not by comparison with the world itself, but in terms of

---

<sup>25</sup> Pierce, Collected Papers, 6.33; and cited by Hookway, 1985:262.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. chapter 5.

their semiotic performance, in terms of the work they do (Dewey and Rorty will suggest).<sup>27</sup>

It is the tension between the rhetoricizing and grounding discourses about signification which seems to have led to quite different readings of Peirce, and later, of pragmatism. Rorty (1961) offers a generous reading which places Peirce in the stream and philosophical mood leading to the later Wittgenstein, reading Peirce as advance repudiation of the developments of empiricism toward logical positivism.<sup>28</sup> But later (Rorty, 1982:161) he is a would-be foundationalist contributing only the *name* "Pragmatism" to a style of writing which *would* overthrow the one-genre, one-game-in-town view of philosophy -- a view Peirce nevertheless retains and does not repudiate.<sup>29</sup> Rorty (like Goudge, 1950) finds two Peirces, identified by two different ways of *reading* him, and by refusing to weld them together, by refusing to force unity, to provide one coherent argument. Peirce can be read either in terms of his concrete suggestions to semiotic theory (Eco, 1977 and 1985a; Skagestad, 1981) or as a

---

<sup>27</sup> Goodman, 1969:244, also takes the line that neither reality nor an attitude or state of mind (interested in the satisfactions of "inquiry") are foundations which "mark any significant difference between the aesthetic and the scientific."

<sup>28</sup> I think there are indeed a great many specific textual parallelisms linking Peirce and Wittgenstein, and more general Peircean themes which resonate throughout the Investigations: the encouragement to investigate signification in the context of *use*; the relativization of cartesian intuition (pains and feels) as a way to dignify the self by placing it behind language or linguistic convention; the attempt to prevent the attempt to get at essences *behind* signs as *the* task of philosophy. For example, cf. Wittgenstein, 1976: nos. 355, 496, 503 and 562 for some epigrams which bare a very close family resemblance to many of Peirce's statements.

<sup>29</sup> Although Rorty's Consequences of Pragmatism, 1982, is itself a take off of the title of a paper by Peirce, "Consequences of Pragmatism," 1906.

transcendental System builder (Apel, 1980) complete with a pervasive cosmological fantasy (Hookway, 1985). In other words, the interest and rhetoric of the *reader* is crucial here as the provider of a schema by which Peirce is to be "represented."

This is where Dewey ends up: *purposeful* readings, be they of Plato or Peirce, are rhetorically persuasive attempts to undermine Philosophy written (and read) as a genre about Truth. He attempts, rather, to read Philosophy as a conglomeration of genres about good (or bad) ways of supporting or criticizing purposeful discourses. (Deconstruction reads foundational texts as always containing figures and metaphors which *themselves* undermine foundationalism. To this Dewey adds a *motivation* for undermining them in certain ways and for certain purposes.) It is Peirce's use of the aesthetic which, I think, illustrates *both* his texts' self-deconstruction (when trying to keep the aesthetic -- the imaginative -- in, but then out of, the act of representation); and his marginal use of the aesthetic (like Royce's later) can also be read in a Deweyan manner, as an attempt superficially to harmonize conflicts and gloss socially uncomfortable tensions with a congenially *individualized* rhetoric of creative imagination and with neoplatonic images of harmony, unity, and contemplation.

In other words, I support the schizophrenic reading of Peirce. And I wish to highlight his parenthetical use of the aesthetic in order to draw out its power to frustrate his foundationalist mood. Peirce did not view the aesthetic consistently as an historical,



stylizing and relativistic *activity* but more often as a *category*. For him, the aesthetic did not imply charting *changes* in style, perspective and interest; nor did it imply the recognition of reversals of priorities between, say, content and form, between the subject to be imitated by painterly technique and/or the medium and technique becoming the subject. Peirce viewed the aesthetic as a general category (Kant again) which related "a multitude of parts [so] as to impart a positive simple immediate quality to their totality."<sup>30</sup> He never made his aesthetics talk to art but, rather, to a Philosophy of the structure of experience; not to the disruptive movements of the "artworld" that were to challenge old "unities" of "simple" experience but to genteel contemplation which immediately pleased; not to the art of breaking down or fragmenting perceptual/conventional orthodoxies -- the hallmark of avant-garde aesthetics -- but to the achievement of "totality," a totality recuperative of all conflict -- social and aesthetic -- by conceptual/legislative fiat into arbitrarily separable domains. This is the Kantian/analytic tradition, not the pragmatic tradition -- which would view the aesthetic as a participatory dimension in a wide, untotizable range of socio/rhetorical practices.

The following four points indicate the role the aesthetic plays in Peirce's texts: 1. Peirce's semiotic was more rhetoricizing and relativizing than his aesthetics -- a place where one might have expected (as in the work of Goodman) an easy alliance. In terms

---

<sup>30</sup> Peirce, Collected Papers, 5:132.



of his semiotic theory, signs were constructs, things we make, in terms of which "[t]he actual world cannot be distinguished from the imagination by any description."<sup>31</sup> Semiotic discourse could not metaphysically disassociate fiction and reference, imagination and description, signs and symbols. Reference was a semiotic skill (an art, if you will) which denied its being secured in wholly descriptive terms.<sup>32</sup> Peirce's *semiotic*, therefore, like James' figurative and ironic prose, best exemplifies an aesthetic theory and implies a rhetoricized practice, which together frustrate (deconstruct) any chance of rehabilitating a single genre of writing, or a single style of signification -- (archi-writing, Foucault would call it), which could sneak past conventionality to a disinterested Foundation which determines those conventions and the socio-historical changes they undergo.

2. On the margins also of Peirce's theory of perception is the artful, and a surprising analogy to film: that *impure* genre of vision, sound and motion; a mixer of genres, like perception itself. A "percept is much like a moving picture accompanied with sounds and other sensations;" and later in the Pragmatism lectures: it is "an image or moving picture or other exhibition."<sup>33</sup> This is a telling use of the aesthetic, of a very new art form, which operates reciprocally and persuasively to recast a view of

---

<sup>31</sup> Peirce, Collected Papers, 3:363.

<sup>32</sup> Goodman (1969 and 1978) is an example of someone who extends the nominalist implications of Peirce's work on signs, and in association with the aesthetic -- two mutually relativistic theoretical allies connected in our "languages of art," connected interdependently in our various traditions and habits of semiotic practice, connected in our various activities as "world-makers."

<sup>33</sup> Peirce, *Ibid.*, 5.115; and cited by Hookway, 1985:156.

perception in terms of the aestheticized, the constructed, the performative and exhibitiv. Tied to this performative and generically mixed analogy with film is the positive value Peirce attributes to the traditional understanding of the aesthetic -- as maker of experiential wholes. The aesthetic functions as a repository of figures that relate to our active framing of experience, to our purposeful power to organize perception through interest.

In Peirce, creeping out from underneath the structure of sense is artifice, the artifice involved not only in how we perceive, but also, therefore, in how we *write* about perception, in how we choose genres for the writing or exhibiting of philosophy. These extensions of the aesthetic follow out of Peirce's own remarks, so long as the use made of it does not (as it occasionally does in Peirce) fall back into a faculty-psychology which cordons the aesthetic off in the mind as a supplement to the austerities of being a good rationalist. In other words, the aesthetic is "bracketed" (Husserl) when it begins to look too threatening to the rationalist enterprise of getting beyond artifice to foundations. Peirce appealed to the aesthetic and the imaginative as functional in achieving perceptual unity in experience because he wanted to accommodate Reid *and* Kant: he wanted to have a commonsense-like and imaginatively adaptable relation to the world which resisted making either the world itself or the inquiring mind structurally pre-determined; *and* he wanted to be assured that our imaginative procedures would nevertheless follow some

systematic, moral and rational plan back to God -- the ultimate Determiner. He wanted openness (the aesthetic) and closure (the divine). But the aestheticization of the production of unity built into the process the notion of stylization, and a dynamic which allows for *changes* of style. The metaphor of structure lost its rhetorical power as it became an artifact, becoming an unSystematic crack in Peirce's Kantianism.

3. But the most hopeful and abstract of Peirce's epistemological appeals was to mathematical reasoning: to that "iconic" and representational discipline which "resembles" the "vital world." Mathematics was understood as the manipulation of an "isomorphic diagram" of the real world, and elevated as the *a priori* foundation to *any* conceivable world. But even in this most pure and deductive of disciplines Peirce saw that it required the imagination, that it required invention to generate experimentation with its icons.<sup>34</sup> The aesthetic is brought in as the impetus to play, to modify and transform mathematical diagrams. Again, although mathematics is the foundation, the *art* of mathematics sits on the margin as its motivating and progressive power. And it must remain on the margin so as not to dilute or threaten its purity with the fictive and playful qualities and implications of art-talk -- always the Dialectician's worry. This need for the inventive imagination is especially clear for

---

<sup>34</sup> In Peirce's tripartite categorization of the sign (as "icon," "index," "symbol"), the "icon" is closest to pure representation, to the world. The "index" refers causally (smoke and fire), but not representationally. The "symbol" is the most variable, conventional and meaning-laden of Peirce's sign relations. Cf. Collected Papers, 2:274-306.

Peirce when assessing the historical developments of geometry, where abstract figures have been created and imaginatively stretched beyond what was implied in their original conceptions.

In other words, the imagination is required to account for radical alteration, for the very *performance* of transformation. A rhetoric of the aesthetic and imaginative is required to generate the development of paradigmatically different mathematical models. But the very rhetoric of history, invention and paradigmatically variable *styles* of "resemblance" relativizes the iconographic epistemology which Peirce is hoping to attribute to the mathematical. Here again is a "clash of rhetoric." Allowing the aesthetic to come off the side lines would undermine Peirce's would-be center, his rhetoric of foundationalism, which only an ontology of mathematics divested of the aesthetic could achieve. Mathematics was the root of Peirce's allegory of knowledge, the allegory of the monastic scientist pushing around symbolically disembodied icons in support of the key sign of achievement: the Foundation. Yet, it is this allegorical reading, concentrating on Peirce's fear of the figurative, of the rhetoricity of the project, which exposes the aesthetic as a necessary category, even as a methodological *requirement* which Peirce firstly needed and then needed to marginalize and keep at a distance.

4. As a "pragmatist," Peirce still wanted more than "seductive persuasions:" he wanted "scientific proof."<sup>35</sup> Interestingly, his

---

<sup>35</sup> Peirce, *Ibid.*, 5:468.

first attempt to offer it in 1878 in "How to Make our Ideas Clear" he himself later repudiated as a "merely rhetorical defense." He wanted it both ways: to read himself rhetorically and as beyond rhetoric; to justify pragmatism in terms of improvements in behavioral habits and their success, but also as having achieved something beyond the relativistic scope of behavioral categories and habits of action -- which could err and err perpetually. Neither behavior nor argument (precisely because of their *interdependence*) are watertight proofs of a theory. So, Peirce admits that what *was* a proof is now rhetoric, but not that what *ever* one comes up with in the "long run" might be "merely" useful or good rhetoric for encouraging successful habits of action. In the end he still wants a teleological escape which only a larger cosmological closure can ensure. He needs a "web of belief" which always outruns the range of his own "proof." But, rather than acknowledge the artifice, the fictive and rhetorical utility of such speculations, he attempts to argue within the self-effacing rhetoric of the "proof;" but it continues to show its face as metaphorical and rhetorical. So, with respect to 1. Peirce's semiotic, 2. to his aesthetic analogies for describing perception, 3. to his appeal to the imagination of the "foundationalist" mathematician, and 4. with respect to his reference to his own rhetoric as failed proof, Peirce, despite himself, strengthens the relationship between the aesthetic, the rhetorical and the pragmatic.



### 3.4 ROYCE, JAMES, AND UNSTABLE GENRES:

Kant, with a dose of the pragmatic, is also between almost every line of Royce's articulation of our "nature" as inquirers. We have a dual nature with a "given" consciousness (transcendental idealism) which wills and spontaneously acts and constructs in the interest of practical achievement (pragmatism). These two styles are conjoined only in order to *complete* the Kantian project of posing and answering the "most fundamental" question, not of the relation of the knower to its object (as if this weren't enough), but of relating every conscious moment to absolute consciousness -- the "Universal Consciousness." This (He) is the unifier of past, present and future, of past error and future reconciliation with Truth. And this is where idea and object become One -- the fulfillment of Kant's two (the phenomenal and the noumenal).<sup>36</sup>

In other words, (*read rhetorically and aesthetically*) the only method which could guarantee ultimate resolution, for Royce, was to posit a point of observation from the perspective of a third person, *from a place we never are except as narrators*, storytellers and theologians. Royce offers a story in which the narrative structure is provided by "logical necessity," which, in turn, posits the key character, Universal Consciousness. This third-man argument personifies a perspective always beyond and always present (for the idealist), absorbing finite creatures ("the fragments") into the Absolute ("the Whole"). This is in the

---

<sup>36</sup> This is a condensed version of the argument of Royce's The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, 1885.

tradition of that genre of ontological narrative made canonical by Anselm, Augustine and Aquinas, a genre which looks sooner to meta-persons than to real persons as the locus for, and resolution of, philosophical/epistemological drama. The point is that this genre *requires* that these conventions of *narration* (logical necessity, Absolute Consciousness) *function* as Method and final Truth: thus, does Royce appeal to the aesthetic.

This Philosophical style aestheticizes itself further in that the "absolute world-soul," which reconciles and absorbs all anti-theses between individuals and the social order, defines a realm of artistic/contemplative perfection evoked primarily in the neoclassical language of unity, harmony, tranquility and sublime peace -- demonstrable, of course, by "rigorous logic," against which "there is no counter-argument."

But the better hidden connection between Royce's Philosophy and his *narrative* efforts are illuminated by his disastrous novel, The Feud of Oakfield Creek. About this novel Santayana wrote: "What a failure. . . ; he knows so much about the Universal Consciousness that he has forgotten what individual consciousness is like."<sup>37</sup> What is interesting here is that Santayana's irony obliquely refers to a direct *exchange* of narrative convention between Royce's Philosophy and his fiction, and the failed omniscience of both. Both operate in a style too elevated to make space for individuation, conflict and ambiguity. His training in a Philosophical genre which posits an abstract, omnipresent and disembodied Absolute, when transposed to his novel, left his writing unable to fill in the complexities of a human scene. Obversely, it was the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>-century conventions of the novel, of the distanced and omniscient judge and narrator, which underwent an effortless change into Philosophical clothes. Royce's philosophical appeal to the third person viewer and knower is also an appeal to this *novelistic* narrator -- the everpresent overseer. It is the extension of an aesthetic convention, a convention of *writing*, which makes Royce's Philosophical style intelligible, which lends "credibility" to the Absolute and to a plot of ultimate (conceptual) redemption. The third person view resolves the "paradoxes" and conflicts by its very distance as their describer.<sup>38</sup> And it is the very visibility of conflicts and anti-theses which,

<sup>37</sup> Cited in Kuklick, 1979:143.

<sup>38</sup> Kierkegaard explicitly avoids this implication by *not* narrating with one voice, but, rather, by writing dialogically, by supplying a variety of subjects and authors to better establish the irresolvability of paradox, irony and conflict by *a* rational/conceptual meta-narrator. I mention Kierkegaard and his narrative technique now also as preparation for a more interesting comparison between him and James which follows.

according to Royce, require the intervention of the Absolute, of One who knows, of One who relates and unifies consciousness and object. Royce's Philosophy functions on the basis of aesthetic and rhetorical conventions of third-person narration asked to do metaphysical and epistemological work. (So much for Royce. He deserves more, but the story doesn't permit it here.)

James was the more consistent at intentionally blurring philosophy and literature, at ironically relating technical concepts and disarming metaphors, at commenting on Systems and also on the psychologies or personalities which needed to promote them. And he did so for pragmatic and persuasive reasons. Regarding the aesthetic, there is more than a gratuitous connection between James the studied artist and painter and James the gifted scientific observer of "nature;" between the character of his philosophical exhortations and his skill as a prose writer. He was as knowledgeable of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century art world as he was of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century life sciences. And these domains and talents mixed (as we will see in his philosophy of mind). James was willing to make assumptions, but not without irony and awareness of their artifactuality. Assumptions were "for the present -- until next year." He was, in other words, a pragmatic rhetorician whose style aestheticized the appeal to foundations by performing exchanges and substitutions between the language of Truth and the languages of parody, of making, of making fun.

It is James who conjoins (rhetorical) form and (philosophical) content in a way which is positively indistinguishable, and who stylistically embodies an avowed pluralism in his narrative technique. He was, unlike Kierkegaard, a half-hearted believer and a whole hearted aesthete who thought the best he could do was produce a prose whose irony, persuasiveness and popularity would be the best criticism of the idealism of the day.<sup>39</sup> I mention Kierkegaard here because his reading of Hegel is very similar to James'. Kierkegaard thought that Hegel would have his first real reading by the inhabitants of the moon.<sup>40</sup> James was less generous: such an "overweening tendency to theorize," "such a perfect delirium of theoretic rapture," could not be limited by that which merely orbits the earth.<sup>41</sup> This is James' way of making reference simultaneously to Systematic metaphysics and to persons who *write* such metaphysics. It is the basis of these rhetorical ploys, the philosophical transpositions they effect, and their consequences for questions of genre which the following comments will attempt to highlight.

It was Charles Renouvier (1818-1903), a french neo-kantian, through whom James read the all-pervasive Kant, and through whom he was persuaded not to partition mind into faculties of understanding, reason and imagination. (More on Dewey's relation to Kant in chapter 4.) Nor would James follow this by

---

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Kierkegaard's Either/Or for a dramatisation of his ambivalent relation to the aesthete and his hope that the believer is the more robust character.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Kierkegaard's Concluding Unscientific Postscript, 1974.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. James, 1897 (1956:263-298).



partitioning language and philosophical *writing* into distinct and parallel genres of categorical abstraction.<sup>42</sup> And James could not go along the route of British empiricist psychology, which made mind, when not simple and passive, then an associationist mechanism for the disinterested collecting of ideas. James, often plagued by depression and illness, rather thought there was a highly interested form of consciousness requiring great effort and will to accomplish anything at all. In other words, the brain had "an indeterminate nervous system" (said James the biologist); and consciousness was "a sort of atmosphere in which Reality floats and plays" (said James the pluralist and aesthete).<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> James, 1909a (1981b:109-110), wrote impatiently and ironically against a philosophical stylistics which suffered from its having inverted a concern for abstraction over experience. "The pragmatist himself has no objection to abstractions. Elliptically, and 'for short', he relies on them as much as anyone, finding upon innumerable occasions that their comparative emptiness makes of them useful substitutes for the overfulness of the facts he meets with. But he never ascribes to them a higher grade of reality. . . . Meanwhile it is endlessly serviceable to be able to talk of properties abstractly and apart from their working, to find them the same in innumerable cases, to take them 'out of time', and to treat of their relations to other similar abstractions. We thus form whole universes of platonic ideas *ante rem*, universes *in posse*, tho none of them exists effectively except *in rebus*. Countless relations obtain there which nobody experiences as obtaining . . . [I]f we take the universe of 'fitting', countless coats 'fit' backs, and countless boots 'fit' feet, on which they are not practically *fitted*; countless stones 'fit' gaps in walls into which no one seeks to fit them actually. In the same way countless opinions 'fit' realities, and countless truths are valid, tho no thinker ever thinks them.

For the anti-pragmatist these prior timeless relations are the presupposition of the concrete ones, and possess the profounder dignity and value. The actual workings of our ideas in verification-processes are naught in comparison with the 'obtainings' of this discarnate truth within them.

For the pragmatist, on the contrary, all discarnate truth is static, impotent, and relatively spectral, full truth being the truth that energizes and does battle. . . . *Essential* truth, the truth of the intellectualists, the truth with no one thinking it, is like the coat that fits tho no one has ever tried it on, like the music that no ear has listened to. It is less real, not more real, than the verified article; and to attribute a superior degree of glory to it seems little more than a piece of perverse abstraction-worship."

<sup>43</sup> James, 1920:205.

Consciousness was "a stream of flights and perchings," not a bundle of discrete Humean instances collected together by a doctrine of associationism, and not an already ordered Kantian hierarchy of prussian categories. The point is that James' stream-of-consciousness view had its *stylistic* correlate in a prose both technical and at play, at home in biology and in literature (also in Henry's), using different discourses which floated toward temporary perchings, and opened up again as rhetorically indeterminate.

His epistemology, like his style (and this is precisely the relationship or parallelism which the question of genre explores), was not representationalist, but voluntaristic. Knowledge was a function of what people desired, what they could, by effort of will, habituate and communicate in a medium which accomplished *more* when it *failed* passively to copy.<sup>44</sup> Between the world and action was a "middle stage [of] thinking . . . , only a place of transit, the bottom of a loop." In this loop, consciousness did its best to sneak in some interventionist re-action and resistance, "for behaviour's sake."<sup>45</sup> Hence, we acquired knowledge as a function of motivated and "selective attention." Onto-categorical oppositions, like inner and outer, internal and external, found and made, (like all other such provisional constructs of the epistemologist) were functional categories in the purposeful and

---

<sup>44</sup> James, 1909a (1981b:51): "If our symbols *fit* the world, in the sense of determining our expectations rightly, they may even be the better for not copying its terms. . . . Those thoughts are true which guide us to *beneficial interaction* with sensible particulars as they occur, whether they copy these in advance or not."

<sup>45</sup> James, 1897 (1956:113-114).

stylized construction of knowledge, looping flexibly back and forth into each other along a continuum.<sup>46</sup> James writes:

I, for my part, cannot escape the consideration, forced upon me at every turn, that the knower is not simply a mirror floating with no foot-hold anywhere, and passively reflecting an order that he comes upon and finds simply existing. The knower is an actor, and co-efficient of the truth on one side, whilst on the other he registers the truth which he helps to create. Mental interests, hypotheses, postulates, so far as they are bases for human action -- action which to a great extent transforms the world -- help to *make* the truth which they declare. In other words, there belongs to mind, from its birth upward, a spontaneity, a vote. It is in the game, and not a mere looker-on . . .<sup>47</sup> (James' italics.)

James was too much the post-cartesian pragmatist to see knowledge as requiring certainty first, of the self below or of God above, before it could accomplish anything. And he was too much the post-darwinian scientist to see nature as an antecedent chaos requiring some cosmic/rationalist glue to prevent it all from falling apart. He was *also* too much the post-kantian (and pre-analytic) *writer* to think that an objectivist and disinterested style of writing could or should close (or worry about closing) ontologized gaps (*between* world and language, noun and metaphor, the philosophical and the aesthetic) which another (abstractionist) idiom had produced in the first place. James

---

<sup>46</sup> Dewey, when articulating this "continuum" in his early psychology essays, refers less to the role of *individual* personality in such looping procedures than does James.

<sup>47</sup> James, 1920:67. I quote this in order also to allude to Rorty. Although his philosophy of mind has written its way through the psychological nominalism of Sellars and the philosophies of mind of Nagel, Putnam etc., it retains strong echoes of James in its reference to making rather than mirroring.

thought of a conceptual scheme of knowledge as that which survived because it was a tool of *successful* orientation, not because it derived from mind (*contra* Kant) or from confrontation with objects (*passim* Davidson). If our scheme "imitated," it was a pragmatically useful "imitation" (interpretation), functioning by means of and for the sake of deeds, of activity. This action based scheme, he saw as rooted not simply in similarity or resemblance (part of the now defunct imagery of "mirroring"), but rooted as much in *difference* (recall note 44), rooted in a purposeful teleology interested in what we could do and what consequences would follow. Schemes were rhetorically useful not dialectically True. Gorgias would have approved.<sup>48</sup>

Logic was, in James' day, the abstractionist game by which one sought to prove an epistemology, a truth, or a scheme. (Both Peirce and Royce made such attempts.). And it is the point at which James the pragmatist remixes genres, mixing psychology and logic, the descriptive and the normative, the abstract and the embodied, in the context of experience:

"Our critics say that when we are asked what truth *means*, we reply by telling only how it is *arrived-at*. But since a meaning is a logical relation, static, independent of time, how can it possibly be identified, they say, with any concrete man's experience, perishing as this does at the instant of its production? This, indeed, sounds profound, but I challenge the profundity. I defy anyone to show any difference between logic and psychology here. The logical relation stands to the psychological relation between idea

---

<sup>48</sup> James alludes, indeed ironically, to his own (failed) sophistry, (his failure to persuade), at the end of his dialogue with the ANTI-PRAGMATIST in The Meaning of Truth, 1909a (1981b:159).



and object only as saltatory abstractness stands to ambulatory concreteness. Both relations need a psychological vehicle; and the "logical" one is simply the "psychological" one disemboweled of its fulness, and reduced to a bare abstractional scheme."<sup>49</sup>

The genre of logic breaks its own laws of purity in order to have something to talk about. It isn't a genre unto itself. It requires a "vehicle," the full expression of which is a mixing of genres, abstract *and* "psychological," relating to persons and actions, in motion, in time, in flux: a stream of genres to relate to a mixed bag of experience. James' measure of the technical genre was how much light it shed on less arcane matters: its moral helpfulness. To talk about a genre of abstractly describing as distinct from that of justifying was either to make a distinction without a difference, or to set a problem that had no solution, and, thereby, generate a genre of writing (about schemes) which made no contact to concrete experience.

When pressed, then, for criteria of choice between systems, styles and truths, he always left the issue purposefully hovering between questions of temperament, questions of the aesthetic

---

<sup>49</sup> James, 1909a (1981b:85-86). I am interested in the alliance between classical pragmatism and contemporary literary theory, and Hayden White's view of classical logic provides an instance, albeit a technical one. In *Tropics of Discourse*, 1986:3, he writes that "the model of the syllogism itself displays clear evidence of troping (what James calls "being arrived-at"): The move from the major premise (all men are mortal) to the *choice* of the datum to serve as the minor (Socrates is a man) is itself a tropological move, a 'swerve' from the universal to the particular which logic cannot preside over, since it is logic itself which is being served by this move. Every *applied* syllogism contains an enthymemic element, this element consisting of nothing but the *decision* (James' "psychological relation") to move from the plane of universal propositions (themselves extended synecdoches) to that of singular existential statements (these being extended metonymies."



demands and sensibilities a style of thought satisfied, and the question of which positions worked better for pursuing particular and related consequences in action. His doctrine/style together form a mixed genre of the personal and impersonal, the private and public. When one is preparing for the last argumentative strike against a grand, public and impersonal theory, out comes a remark on its producer's psychological needs. Münsterberg's system was not only wrong, he was "stiff."<sup>50</sup> Systems acquired personification, as tough-minded, or tender-minded, effete, and inexperienced. Yet, the closer we get to the psychological, to individual consciousness, the more it spreads itself out into traditions, habits and public streams, into more un-resting and irresolvable dualities. The closer we get to the System, the sooner we find a subject; the closer we get to the subject, the sooner we see an impinging and public world on the horizon. James moves

---

<sup>50</sup> For James, Münsterberg was a figure who conflated conceptual artificiality, congeniality to the academic social order, and both with an anal temperament. About Münsterberg's grand congress on Kant and its 400 international speakers, James wrote that his program was "the perfectly inevitable expression of the [academic] system . . . , an artificial construction for the sake of making the authority of professors inalienable, no matter what asinities they may utter, as if the bureaucratic mind were the full flower of nature's self-revelation." (cited in Perry, R.B., The Thought and Character of William James, 1935:471. Nature was *not* philosophy's foundation, or what philosophy (as institution) mirrored: and James wrote accordingly.

between them without producing unity<sup>51</sup> (like the aesthetically neoclassical Royce), but also without fear that the inter-textual play with which they make each other is threatening. (This is the "pragmatic temper.") James saw such interdependent stylizing of persons and worlds as positive, and his technical/ironic rhetoric embodied the swinging which such pluralism implied.

One should parenthetically mention Münsterberg (a colleague of James') also because of his very early and interesting work on film. He is also a vehicle for pointing out that a sustained interest of most of the early Harvard lot was eventually to ask their philosophical idiom to offer some form of public commentary on non-technical issues, and to address the arts as media of significance to a philosophy wanting to display a thorough understanding of socially important discourses other than science.

---

<sup>51</sup> This is, again, one of the many striking parallels between James and Kierkegaard. They were both ironic believers; both were committed paradoxically to the concrete individual subject and to its insubstantiality and impotence; and both were un-linear and anti-Systematic stylists, dramatists, writers of dialogues, as a result of, and as a metaphor for, this situation. James' notebooks often have an existentialist ring to them, and, like Kierkegaard, they are preoccupied with the will, sometimes with suicide and death as its act of liberation, and with artifice and intellectual creativity as its alternative compensation. Their style simultaneously parodies over-indulging in the dilemmas of the individual subject, ironizing against the grandiloquent tone of both the Absolute and romantically glorified Subjects of 19<sup>th</sup>-century metaphysics-poetics. Real conflicts were, for both James and Kierkegaard, not epistemological but ethical. Hence, philosophical writing about real conflicts was primarily an act of communication, not through rationalist abstraction but through art: That the language of pathos (of affect) was inseparable from technical vocabulary in such communication served to aestheticize the art of philosophizing.

(Paul de Man is a contemporary literary theorist who also argues for the relation (via Romanticism) between epistemological and affective discourse, without final separation or resolution of one into the other. But (indeed, like the Romantics), he treats this "paradox" or "dilemma" as some sort of absolutely "deep," opaque and unapproachable trauma in the literary psyche. Cf. The Rhetoric of Romanticism, 1984.)

This is the milieu in which Münsterberg was led, already by 1916, to write a book on film: The Photoplay: A Psychological Study.<sup>52</sup> His interest was in treating it, indeed, as an art form, as an illustration that what was a popular idiom was not too undignified for philosophical reflection (p.17), and that a new art form could ride on the back of an essentially technical/mechanical achievement -- (an aesthetic-industry relationship which neither Victorian nor romantic aesthetics would treat kindly). He made acute comments on the relation between an idiom which "represented" in a realist-fact sense and *symbolized* in an idealist sense (p.23). Film was not seen as a mirror of an outer, external world but, rather, as mental. He saw film in terms of its intentional and organizational capacities. In other words, he associated the movie and mind, associating, thereby, specific technical details with specific mental processes: e.g., the cutback (flash back) with memory, the technical manipulation of space-time causality with the overcoming of the same by consciousness (pp. 41-58).

Münsterberg thought that the film's aesthetic disrepute in 1916 reflected a bad theory of art -- (No disagreement here.). Film, indeed like art more generally, he understood not as imitation, but as *transformation* -- (an echo of James and Dewey, of much pragmatic theory of art *and* science), as purposefully selecting and remodelling the features it attended to (p.63). The film was well suited not so much to documentary but to dramatic, even

---

<sup>52</sup> I am following Kuklich's references to the book; Kuklich, 1977:213-214.

allegorical, narrative. This was Münsterberg's way of inverting standard criticism of its mechanization and a way of treating film as a triumph of mind *over* the laws of the "external world," of causally determined real-time narrative (p.95). He saw film, therefore, as a pre-figuration of the eventual cultural victory of absolute idealism, of the overcoming of "outer" nature by the "free and joyful play of the mind" (p.100). (Interestingly, he rejected sound and color in film as developments precisely because they would bring film too close to the natural world.) The point to this interlude on Münsterberg is that the themes, here, of art as *transfigurative* and transformational, as accepting of and manipulative of changes in mechanical technology, as selective and *socially* implicative narrative, are all issues thematized in the pragmatic theory of the day, despite Münsterberg's hope for their re-absorbtion into idealism.

### 3.5 GENRES WHICH STABILIZE: WRITING ON SOCIETY:

Aside from Dewey, none of the aforementioned local precursors of pragmatic writing were socio-political thinkers and critics of any stature, or *public* rhetoricians as a consequence of their non-technical interests and "overbeliefs."<sup>53</sup> This was left to the non-Harvard pragmatism of Dewey, G. H. Mead, Sydney Hook, and later, to the contemporary remodelling of pragmatism in the comparative work of Richard Bernstein. (Bernstein attempts to make contact between the continental tradition of social philosophy (Marx, Sartre, Habermas and Arendt) and the pragmatist work of Peirce and Dewey via the concept of "action."<sup>54</sup>) The point is that Peirce, Royce and James began implicitly to relativize and destabilize the foundational priorities of Philosophy (through semiotics, aesthetics and pragmatics), but they also stabilized a certain distance between writing philosophy and engaging with concrete social problems. As was mentioned on p. 90, this was due to the conjoined power of the institutionalization of philosophy as a distinct discipline and the concomitant understanding of what sort of genre of writing best exploited its grand importance and, therefore, its distance from other domains of life and work. The result was thin social philosophy.

---

<sup>53</sup> "Overbelief" is James' word for a "perspective on the universe" -- what the German's call "Weltanschauung;" and it is a jibe at empiricists and rationalists whose theories *overdetermine* the "facts" they "discover" without admitting that their theories do just that: overdetermine.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. R. Bernstein, especially Praxis and Action, 1971.



Royce's worry about "Community" was metaphysical,<sup>55</sup> and when made concrete, it was a trivial and clichéd rhetoric of "alienation," couched in a vaguely edifying and moralistic discourse. Royce had:

1. no analysis of the specific conditions causing particular sorts of social problems *within* the grand "Community."
2. no vocabulary for writing concretely about the distribution and extension of specific formations of power and how they manoeuvred the structure and development of the economy.
3. little concern with the patterns of interest represented and sustained by public politics and party machinery.
4. and Royce had little contact with the texts of historians and economists. This meant that he had no grasp of the history of the American political economy regarding both its internal and international construction and power, and, therefore, no apparatus for assessing institutions (like the university) and their role in this history. In the context of the genre of abstractionist metaphysics, "lesser" realms could barely make an appearance in Reality.

James was aware of a "labor question," but not of a social problem regarding the distribution of wealth and the violence of turn-of-the-century industrial culture. Social amelioration was sensitively personalized primarily in the metaphors or poetics of inwardness and Emersonian self-realization -- a genteel poetics itself for distribution to, and the consumption of, an upper-class market. Texts which, indeed, referred to social conflict, resolved it

---

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Royce, The Philosophy of Loyalty, 1908.

in a cozy blanket of belief and easy wisdom, and ignored the vocabulary of ideology with which Dewey was familiar.<sup>56</sup> James' encouragement that dispute between rich and poor be dealt with in a spirit of "tolerance and good humor" produces readable texts and constructive sentiments, but few pragmatic consequences.

Royce did write out of an interest in social cohesion and duty. But Royce's Philosophy of Loyalty repeatedly uses an uncritical rhetoric of martial virtues as those best suited for expounding the issues involved in such loyalty -- to a "cause," to "duty," to "service and discipline", all revealingly illustrated in war. The concepts of horror, on the one hand, or of criticism, on the other, are tellingly absent. In "The Moral Equivalent of War," James went further than Royce into the *psychological* subtleties of attempting to sublimate the "martial spirit" (already *disassociated* from material-national interests), while nevertheless preserving "[m]artial virtues . . . [as] the enduring cement [to] social hardihood."<sup>57</sup> But neither Royce nor James (nor Peirce) borrowed or produced a *social* discourse concerned in the same way with "transformations" as were their aesthetics, as concerned with what groomed social relations as with what stylized philosophical

---

<sup>56</sup> Roth, R. J., 1962, also interprets Dewey, wrongly I think, in terms of this set of texts on self-realization, packaging Dewey as an American cliché promoting the development and fulfillment of individual personality, to be evangelically exported for the benefit of the rest of civilization: Dewey is "the main spokesman for whatever America has to offer the world" (p.2) . . . in order to "gain recognition as an influential factor in the development of civilization and culture." (p. 4).

<sup>57</sup> James, 1911:287-88.

progress. And in the background of Harvard pragmatism's failure is how they generally understood the genre of philosophy.<sup>58</sup>

Firstly, the model philosophical genre of Harvard achieved its purity, stability and importance in proportion to its *distance* from social debate -- unlike the sophists. The Harvard lot had a hierarchical view of the various branches of philosophical discourse -- logic, epistemology and metaphysics always being prior to, and the rational basis of, our understanding of the world. The *asocial* rhetoric and mathematical order of the technical discourses were the grounding gambits required *before* the rest of culture could be grasped and/or altered. Thus, they provided a constant deferral of application of a socially relevant rhetoric by first understanding philosophy as a genre that defined itself as *prior* to such social interdependencies, as *prior* to rhetoricity. (Dialectic again.)

To the extent to which the genre of political and social writing, or the rhetoric of social amelioration, was got round to, it glossed over the institutions of power which arbitrated (or ignored) dispute, couching its gestures in the rhetoric of a late Calvinism of individual-moral concern. To achieve Truth as pure and/or as provable, the model genres at Harvard were logic (symbolic)

---

<sup>58</sup> It is strange that in Kuklick's The Rise of American Philosophy Dewey receives a dismissive exit already in the preface, and never makes it back into the book; although Kuklick's own criticisms of the "public philosophy" of both James and Royce are in terms of what Dewey did and they failed to do. Furthermore, James himself, in any single chapter, relies on Dewey and mentions him more often than one finds in the whole of Kuklick's book -- a book which has more interest in the long run for historians of Harvard than for historians of American philosophy.

and/or natural science (verifiable, if we had long enough). This was to the exclusion of public rhetoric -- the context in which the question of genre can be asked in an applied, pragmatic and pluralistic way. James, of course, argued for pluralism, and his artifice went a long way in achieving it, but his concerns remained primarily those of the Bostonian gentry.

A second reason for the lack of socio-political philosophy was due more specifically to textual habit and tradition: it was a generation working its way through Kant's Critique, through the essentially technical, ahistorical and apolitical problems it generated, and through the conventional protestant morality it supported. Kant set an agenda which set off looking for "ontological" structures, and not for their social histories. Whereas Dewey was closer to the historical and political dimensions of Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind;<sup>59</sup> whose logic, therefore, was tied to the social values it, at some point, would have to associate with; and whose science was only interested in "verification" to the extent to which "observable" *consequences* for social action were involved -- achieving, thereby, not Truth but new sets of problems, vocabularies and methods for continuing inquiry.

Thirdly, the centralizing and professionalizing milieu of Cambridge led to the first generation of successful big time academics, protected by and uncritical of a social order Harvard so skillfully groomed and represented. Dewey, by contrast, was at Johns

---

<sup>59</sup> More on the relationship between Dewey and Hegel in chapter 4.

Hopkins, Chicago and Columbia (amongst other places), places without the same centralizing sociological (financial) gravity so helpful in forming an orthodoxy of style -- as speculative Berlin and structuralist/post-structuralist Paris have sometimes been able to achieve. Nor were Dewey's activities as philosopher and writer productive of or parasitic upon a unified view of the philosophical professional, determined by a single set of concerns, to be pursued by a single style of work.

The intellectual style of Harvard eventually neglected the challenge of social philosophy, treating the genre of philosophical writing as much as a refuge as an instrument of greater explanation. Partly because Dewey was not in Cambridge, did not come to philosophy through Kant, and whose philosophy was from the start a blurring of genres -- poetic, political, scientific, and above all pragmatic, one can find references to social theorists like Marx, Weber and Durkheim never mentioned by Peirce, Royce or James. To mention Mill (as James did) is not to come very far into the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> centuries of social philosophy, of socially robust rhetoric. The behavioral consequences that James encouraged philosophy to think was its "pay-off" were left without much social clothing. This left Dewey to ask, still in unison with the rhetoric of Bacon: where do we see the fruits?. His answer: in the "lived experience," and in its criticism -- philosophy being "a generalized theory of criticism." The point here is that "experience" and "criticism" are purposefully sloppy and ordinary words which leave open "the order of things" (Foucault): they are



more aesthetic notions (experiencing, criticizing, and re-experiencing) than epistemological categories; political and pedagogical notions rather than mental meta-categories; experimental notions rather than ontologically *a priori* categories. They refer to different yet interrelated genres of (critical) activity and writing. This mixing of domains and the resulting conceptual ambiguities are not for lack of semantic discipline, but in recognition of the lack of a semantic rule of law which could constrain such mixing from happening (as Derrida too will argue). This lack of constraint encourages the *positive* spill over of meaning for the benefit of a rhetoric of application and use -- always flexible, in process, for the relating of various discourses.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Dewey was aware of the difficulty of connecting philosophically useful concepts and ordinary language, and of his failures when trying. Regarding the notion of "experience," while preparing a new edition of Experience and Nature in 1951, he wrote to Arthurr Bentley of changing the title to Nature and Culture: "I was dumb not to have seen the need for such a shift when the old text was written. I was still hopeful that the philosophic word "Experience" could be redeemed by being returned to its idiomatic usages -- which was a piece of historic folly, the hope I mean." (Cited in Ratner, 1964:643.)

#### 4.1 SPARRING WITH LITERATURE AND STRUCTURAL ARTIFACTS:

Dewey's point, then, was not that we don't know things, but to ask what sort of an experience knowing is, "how things are experienced when they are experienced *as* known things," as artifacts: and what purposeful variety of critical-descriptive genres will help express this. In effect, fiction and description, art and knowledge, interested stories and methodologically rigorous reference are not *ontologically* separated, but different *genres* of activity and behavior, distinguished for pragmatic reasons. Dewey wrote to Bentley: "If I ever get the needed strength, I want to write on *knowing* as the way of behaving in which linguistic artifacts transact business with physical artifacts, tools, implements, apparatus, both kinds being planned for the purpose and rendering *inquiry* of necessity an *experimental* transaction . . ." <sup>1</sup> (Dewey's italics.) Epistemology and aesthetics come together in that we know through constructs and their affect and effect, through artifacts and their power and persuasiveness. The model is not nature or mathematics but art and criticism.

In the context of his own rhetoric about "nature," "experience" and "science," and despite his structural jargon about the "organism" -- about that which always persists in our transactions, Dewey (in 1930) thought that it was when the "*social* sciences and *arts* become the objects of reflective attention" that there would be a

---

<sup>1</sup> -- a rather awkward sentence cited in Ratner (ed.) 1964:387.

new "synthetic movement in philosophy" -- not rallying around "Realism," but around products of culture. And it *does* appear that questions about the nature of reading and writing *texts*, about *styles* of reasoning, about the *rhetoric* of rationality, about the *persuasiveness* of theory, about theorizing through literature and the *arts*, are precisely those interests (relativizing social and aesthetic interests) involved in the rapprochement between Continental and Anglo-American philosophy. Habermas and Foucault pay attention to cultural complexes in the genesis of powerful discourses like science and rationality. Continental structuralists and post-structuralists, (like Said, Fish and Bloom in the U.S.: de Man is somewhere in between), pay attention to "textuality" and the problems of interpreting literary-cultural signs. The semiotics of Cassirer, Goodman and Eco also attend to questions of signification. And with Derrida, Cavell, Danto, Margolis and others, questions of art -- novels, paintings, films -- have become more fruitful than asking how philosophy and mathematics and physics are related. In other words, there is a lot of very differentiated modern dress refashioning issues consonant with the pragmatism of Dewey.

In this chapter, then, I wish to concentrate, firstly, on the shift to art as area of interest and model for theory, and the way in which Dewey prepares for this shift (more thoroughly than the pragmatic predecessors of the previous chapter, but in occasional difficulty when trying get out of his own naturalist metaphysics). Secondly, I wish to assess this shift as it encounters, is recast by,

and forms selective alliances with the powerful and influential movements within structuralist, post-structuralist and other literary theory. And I wish, then, to move to a broader notion of the aesthetic, less preoccupied with idealized questions of "textuality" and language and more concerned with "worldly" problems of interpretation and criticism.

Dewey's pragmatism, then, will be made use of because it was and is an attempt to talk contextually, to decenter an institutional image (as epistemologically founded/grounded) of philosophical discourse. It is a bid to use philosophical talk (writing) as criticism more than demonstration, as pluralistic and constructively ambidextrous, rather than the repeated right-arm attempt to hunt down metaphysical, acultural constraints to center discourse. The foundationalist's terms of the debate, (that we either supply grounds or risk irrationality), makes the pragmatist wonder at how such grounded transcendentals could possibly be provided, how much longer we need restate this "problem," and why one is moved by the motivating pseudo-fear that we could otherwise suddenly be left unfunded, without things to attend to, without practical and functional discourses to inhabit which simply get on doing certain things anyway. He would rather ridicule the foundationalist dream, especially as it gets circumlocuted by the honor the foundationalist attributes to his own stylistics: "But this is *argument*, rather than (merely) "good criticism" and "artful" or "useful talk"."

Post-structuralist literary criticism will, in this context (and in the following chapter), provide a useful sparring partner because it seems to be a form of intellectual work and writing where this sort of aesthetic pragmatism is practiced. It is a local style of behavior which exemplifies this shift in metaphors from epistemology to pragmatics, from "finding" what is "in" texts (or "in" the world) to producing readings and writings with the help of what is not "in" the text, with "things" about which the "world"/"text" might be silent, or interested in marginalizing or excluding. Such writing essays a shift from the metaphysics of "imitation" (Plato) to the general function of imagination (Dewey), from the metaphysics of "presence" (Heidegger) to the metaphors with which we construct "presence" -- in its absence and/or "difference" (Derrida). Such literary theory proposes a shifty slide from "here-is-my-object talk" to "here-is-my-contextual-grid talk" (Foucault). For talk, they write, is not sited in any one original place, Subject, or meta-source.

And aesthetics will form the counterpoint to this general post-structuralist narrative because it was a focus by which pragmatism (Dewey) dismantled the dominant images of Philosophy (as "representation" and "True Knowledge," rather than as artistic interaction and useful). Aesthetics was for Dewey not, as was more often the case, a philosophical amendment (Kant, Hegel, etc.) to an *a priori* system which needed an aesthetic theory



to round off its claim to highbrow and Systematic completeness.<sup>2</sup> It forms the counterpoint also because *literary* metaphors are not the only ones available to do this philosophically "deconstructive" work, literature is not the only medium of cognitive experience,<sup>3</sup> and it is not a large enough skewer around which to wrap critical questions regarding the non-literary dimensions of contemporary social and political experience. (On the non-literary pragmatics or rhetoric, for example, of music [with reference to Schönberg and Copland], cf. chapter 6, pp. 247-263.) The metaphors of "textuality" -- (a hangover from structuralist linguistics), in order for the "play of difference" to continue, need some opposition; and aesthetics and rhetoric more generally can offer something functionally broader than that which e.g., Derrida as critic provides. (Edward Said, for example, will be mentioned as a proponent of intercourse between text-talk and world-talk, "*between*" which criticism has its function. The prepositional locating of "between" is not intended to rehabilitate an

---

<sup>2</sup> This jibe fails, of course, to differentiate the many and important ways in which Kant and Hegel differ in their appeal to the aesthetic, in terms either of a Critique of the *structure* of judgement (Kant) or in terms of the historical "*Erscheinung*" of the absolute *Geist* (Hegel) respectively. But both propound a view of the aesthetic which stands or falls in terms of the credibility of the System in which it receives its (subordinate) function. As R. Bubner writes on Hegel: "Die Aktualität der Hegelschen Ästhetik kann gewiß nicht aus ihrem systematischen Anspruch abgeleitet werden. Denn mit diesem Anspruch steht und fällt das Verdikt über das Ende der Kunst. Kunst läßt sich in das philosophische System nur eingliedern, wenn ihre eigentliche Stunde vorüber ist." (Hegel, *Ästhetik* I/II, ed. & intro. R. Bubner, 1977:16-17.) For a pragmatically *integrative* (non-*a priori*) approach to aesthetics *and* philosophy, and a contemporary use of Deweyian themes regarding them both as mutually related, open and culturally emergent products (*without* the aid of the absolute *Geist*), cf. J. Margolis, esp. 1980, *Art and Philosophy*.

<sup>3</sup> As Goodman, 1984:9 reiterates, the notational systems, and our *experience* of those systems in the other arts is no *less* cognitive (*contra* the Kantian tradition of aesthetics) than is our relationship to philosophy, literature and science.

ontologically *parasitic* relationship between "text" and "world-itself.")<sup>4</sup>

#### 4.2 CULTURE, NATURE AND ART:

Dewey often felt the need to connect his naturalistic vocabulary and his cultural-historical vocabulary in a rhetoric seeking "the generic traits manifested by existences of all kinds."<sup>5</sup> And these traits were to be synthesized by the figure of the philosopher who discovers these "large and constant features of human sufferings, enjoyments, trials, failures and successes together with the institutions of art, science, technology, politics, and religion which mark them. . ."<sup>6</sup> He was, as Rorty (1982:73) points out, using the genre (of old metaphysics) he wanted out of. But I think it is the use question -- the *use* to which "metaphysics" gets put -- which indeed helped him out; and it is his interest in *aesthetic* questions which helped him make the artifice or genre (of metaphysics) an expendable one.

It is not that Dewey thought such generic-traits-metaphysics was the philosopher's *primary* task. For such traits were "sure to turn up in *every* universe of discourse." His point was that such

---

<sup>4</sup> Cf. E. Said, esp. "Interview with Edward Said," *Diacritics*, 6:3, 1976:41; and "The Text, the World, the Critic" in *Textual Strategies* (ed.) Harari, 1979:161-188 for his discussion the importance of being able to generate critical discourses which do not neglect the relations between literature and the social power-discourses it interacts with.

<sup>5</sup> Dewey, 1929b:412.

<sup>6</sup> Dewey, 1927:59. This was written in response to Santayana's review of *Experience and Nature* and his remark that a "naturalistic metaphysics" is a contradiction in terms. Cf. Schilpp, 1939.

"definitions" of traits (what metaphysics achieves) can only be a vague "ground-map" for further "criticism, elaborating base lines to be employed in more intricate triangulations."<sup>7</sup> Rorty sees a tension here between generic-traits-talk and therapeutic criticism -- or criticism of the tradition -- which has to be resolved in the interest of strengthening the rhetorical hand of the pragmatist to chide philosophers away from their old self-adulating games of "discovering large and constant features," and mythologizing the philosopher as someone who specializes in so doing. I think Rorty is right. But even after Dewey is more thoroughly rhetoricized, he still seems committed to a somewhat broader set of cultural games than is Rorty.

Rorty writes that there is "a recurrent flaw in Dewey's work: his habit of announcing a bold new positive program when all he offers, and all he needs to offer, is criticism of the tradition."<sup>8</sup> This is correct but misleading. When Dewey becomes both positive and concretely constructive, especially in his political and educational writings, he is not *trying* to write professional philosophy, to give it one grand program. (Recall, p. 81, Dewey's pedagogical rhetoric.) That is, when he did offer programmatic suggestions, it was not *in* the genre Rorty rightly criticizes. In this sense, Dewey did offer more than "criticism of the tradition" precisely by writing about things *other* than the philosophical tradition, and by criticizing those who do not. Dewey had already led the

---

<sup>7</sup> Dewey, 1929b:413. (My italics.)

<sup>8</sup> Rorty, 1982:78.

traditional horse to water and Rorty is still basking (indeed elegantly) on the beach.

But, of course Rorty's criticisms of Dewey are more precise, and his eventual encomium not reduced by them. Dewey, in Experience and Nature, was indeed after a "structural" jargon which would not encourage unbridgeable discontinuities between the vocabularies of biologists, psychologists and social critics. But in so doing, there was (according to Rorty) a "return to Lockean modes of thought [which], under the aegis of Darwin, betrayed precisely the insight which Dewey owed to Green: that nothing is to be gained for an understanding of human knowledge by running together the vocabularies in which we describe the causal antecedents of knowledge with those in which we offer justifications of our claims to knowledge."<sup>9</sup> In one way this is right. But another and, I think, more useful reading of Dewey highlights his work on just how the tradition has indeed conflated these two forms of writing, how often "causal antecedents" jargon was located and used apologetically to *justify* social jargons, social interests, and how this is at some point a mistake. But Dewey also held that this running together is purposeful, (and not a "contradiction in terms," *passim* Santayana), when these jargons begin to refer to each other for *pragmatic* support, when *both* become *social* rhetorics for the achievement of some mutually beneficial purpose. That is, if the former (causal jargon) is considered an epistemologically *grounded* jargon, the mixing with

---

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*: 81.

normative jargon is confused and dubious; if the former is itself confessedly value-laden and rhetorical in the first place, then it might not always be confused. Dewey thought *both* were social practices for solving specific problems; and this is the level at which "continuities" between these jargons was sought. And *this* continuity ties Dewey not primarily to Locke (and the assimilation of higher "ideas" to lower "feels"), but more to Hegel and the historical continuities involved in any nature/culture-inquiry, in any socially *useful* explanatory-justificatory strategy (without, of course, the pantheistic teleology which Hegel's Absolute provided).

Rorty has Dewey hoping to provide a grand scheme of "generic traits," and scheming to be both naturalistic (Lockean) *and* transcendental (Hegelian) in order to achieve it.<sup>10</sup> Whereas, I think his interest was in a rhetoric of social amelioration which simply did not have an adequate excuse for leaving anything out: and in this sense Rorty is right to call him "Hegelian" too. For Rorty, the importance of Dewey is his treating the "cultural developments which Kant thought it was the task of philosophy to preserve and protect as simply temporary stopping-places" for experience and inquiry:

"Kant thought that there were three permanent data of philosophy: (1) Newtonian physics and the resulting conception of a unified science centering on mathematical descriptions of micro-structures; (2) the common moral consciousness of a North German Pietist; (3) the sense of delicacy, of playful freedom from the imperatives of scientific inquiry and moral duty, offered by the eighteenth-

---

<sup>10</sup> Rorty bases his comments primarily on the one text: Experience and Nature.



century aesthetic consciousness. The aim of philosophy was to preserve these cultural accomplishments by drawing the lines between them (preferably writing a separate book about each) and showing how they could be rendered compatible with one another and made "necessary." Philosophy, for Kant, as it had been for Aristotle, was a matter of drawing boundaries to keep scientific inquiry from interfering with morals, the aesthetic from interfering with the scientific, and so on."<sup>11</sup>

For Dewey, on the other hand, (like the historicist side of Hegel in some respects), 18<sup>th</sup>-century physics, the contrite believer, and the theology of the Sublime, were expendable local periods in the modernization of experimentation and inquiry: discourses in the history of a culture which could now talk about all of these without separating them from one another into distinct onto-categories.<sup>12</sup> Dewey regarded the quest for rational order, moral imperatives, and an analytic of Beauty as different in *kind* only if one thought of rational order as "accuracy of representation," of morality as the imperative to universalize the conventions of the province, and of beauty as "purposeness without purpose." Dewey did not offer point for point rebuttal of Kant's period pieces, (or of any one else's "timeless" arguments), he simply left the 18<sup>th</sup> century for his own.

Rorty is right to point out that Dewey was after big fish, and that he didn't offer the "more precise" and "dialectically skilled" deconstructions of specific problems that Rorty praises the followers of either the early or the later Wittgenstein as having

---

<sup>11</sup> Rorty, 1982:85-86

<sup>12</sup> This is also the critical thrust of Goodman's nominalist and relativist semiotics.

achieved. And with good reason. Dewey was investigating a culture which was not itself producing these specific problems: problems which the legacy of an already tired tradition had left behind (like the mind/body problem). He was encouraging philosophy to be an art which could change its stylistic model: *away* from physics and truth-as-copying. He was also criticizing the cultural and institutional formations which supported the 20<sup>th</sup>-century rise of a philosophical style trying to *free* itself from value in order to achieve fact: and making only negative achievements. As Putnam writes in "After Empiricism:" "The accomplishments of analytic philosophy are primarily negative: it destroyed the very problems with which it started by successive failure even to determine what would *count* as a solution."<sup>13</sup>

We now had philosophy without substantial problems, or solutions to the ones it thought were worth analysing, nevertheless carrying on in a mannerist tradition with a style disengaged from larger social questions, and benefiting by *not* assessing the cultural environment which supports and markets the continued production of useless analytic artifacts. The point is that when Dewey exchanged the model of clear representation (and its legalistic expertise) for the model of experimental art, he put philosophy in a position to engage in the interdisciplinary pluralism required of a genre without foundations. Rather than competing to write the wittiest *history* of a played-out style, he suggested places to go which were neither True nor eternal: not on the basis

---

<sup>13</sup> H. Putnam, "After Empiricism," 1985:28.

of a "metaphysics of experience" (Rorty's accusation), but because the philosophical artifice ought to make contact with as wide a range of experience as possible (Dewey's recommendation). Dewey did *not* say that talk of "generic traits" would make philosophical criticism of culture more "scientific," more "fundamental," or more "deep" than the criticisms of minority leaders, novelists, or school teachers. He wanted the game to be played by as many as possible. And if too few were playing, then philosophy had something to criticize.

Rorty too, in talking about Dewey, makes the shift from the naturalist to the artist (the encomium):<sup>14</sup> "Dewey's work is one of those [great] achievements. It is great not because it provides an accurate representation of generic traits of nature or experience or culture or anything else. Its greatness lies in the sheer provocativeness of its suggestions about how to slough off our intellectual past, and about how to treat that past as material for playful experimentation rather than as imposing tasks and responsibilities upon us. Dewey's work helps us put aside that spirit of *seriousness* which artists traditionally lack and philosophers are traditionally supposed to maintain."<sup>15</sup> Rorty does not in the end blame him for occasionally coming "down with the disease he was trying to cure"<sup>16</sup> (when using traits-talk). The selective alliance Rorty forges with Dewey (as critic of the tradition, offering a change of vocabulary, increasing our

---

<sup>14</sup> The notion of the "pragmatic" and "post-modern" artist will be taken up in chapter 6.

<sup>15</sup> Rorty, 1982:87.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*:88.

discursive space) is a good one: one which has links extending also to the most important continental attempts to aestheticize our philosophical texts, to move from nature to art and culture, to change our vocabulary. It is in these senses that pragmatism converses with structuralism and post-structuralism.

#### 4.3 THE RHETORIC OF THE STRUCTURALIST TEXT:

One can make mention of structuralism in the same sense as one does the analytic. The analytic broke itself down, and a post-analytic pragmatism came back with ironic vengeance. Structuralism too succeeded by producing its offspring: post-structuralism. I will summarize briefly and vaguely some tenets of, and consequences of, structuralists' work: their success at focussing a form of attention and instituting a *style* through these tenets -- (their *rhetorical* success); and their failure to make structuralist linguistics a foundational discovery procedure to prove them -- (the pragmatic consequences). As examples of both I will focus briefly on Roman Jakobson's applications to, and impact on, literary criticism: on our understanding of a text. And I will discuss briefly Lévi-Strauss' efforts to universalize "structure" as a technique for understanding mind and culture as the products of this ubiquitous (idealist) "structure": a text (or structure) he put in everyones *head*. In this narrative, Jakobson will play the role of the empiricist, the atomist, "discovering" the fundamental units which govern what gets made with them. And Lévi-Strauss will be the Dialectical figure, setting up grand oppositions into which all consciousness and its cultural products can be mythologically united. Roland Barthes and Stanley Fish will be the helpmates who provide literary criticism with a way back to where pragmatic criticism had been waiting: at the crossroads of a non-foundational pluralism, where texts are members of interpretational communities purposefully producing different readings, structured not by "deep structures," but by



"interpretants" (as Peirce put it).<sup>17</sup>

Structuralism (like analytic philosophy) also begins with a "science versus literature" slogan. It is interested more in determinative structures than in pragmatically expansive and edifying interpretations. Structuralists are concerned not so much with the meanings of individual works as with the linguistic conditions of meaning altogether; not so much with single texts and pragmatic contexts as with the linguistic operations upon which literature and culture themselves are based. "New Criticism" wanted to constrain interpretation to "the text itself." Classical structuralism wanted to go even further back: to the structure of language itself which produces texts. And the method for so doing was to be provided by linguistics (primarily Saussure and Jakobson). So, the success or failure of the program would depend on one's interpretation and use of the linguistic model: and these varied. But this "euphoric dream of scientificity" (as Barthes himself later called his relationship to structuralism), once turned metaphorical, did nevertheless provide some important insights into our understanding of texts. (Structuralism has a different trajectory in anthropology which I will only allude to through Lévi-Strauss

---

<sup>17</sup> For a view of "structures" very close to Dewey's in its reference not to linguistic structures, but to open and developmentally maleable biological and organic "structures," cf. Jean Piaget's Structuralism, and also his Genetic Epistemology. As compensation for my very crude and abbreviated narrative about structuralism (I am, after all, wanting to go elsewhere), I refer the reader to three of the most useful theoretical, and already classic, commentaries regarding literary structuralism: Fredric Jameson's The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism (1972), Robert Scholes' Structuralism in Literature: An Introduction (1974), and Jonathan Culler's Structuralist Poetics (1975).

in order to highlight the value of pragmatic questions over structuralist and formalistically linguistic ones.)

Some of the fundamentals by which a diffuse set of structuralists would recognize each other were: 1. Cultural phenomena, (like texts), are not material objects or constrained and localizable by analogy to such objects. Texts convey meaning by use of signs: not through realist analogues or representational icons, but by (unnatural) semiotic conventions.<sup>18</sup> 2. And these signs do not have essences (remember Peirce) which mirror the world. They receive their intellegibility in terms of a network of *relations*. 3. The assumption required to get the rhetoric of structure off the ground was that there *must* be an underlying *system* of distinctions, generative oppositions and *rule* following conventions (forming a *code*) in order for meaning to be possible. 4. And following this assumption is the requirement that there be a *discovery procedure* (provided by linguistics) which will allow that structure to be elaborately detailed and (mimetically) represented -- (another imitational aesthetic). 5. This having been accomplished, it can *then* be applied to literary artifacts (which Jakobson attempted to elaborate), and to all mental and cultural processes (which Lévi-Strauss attempted to elaborate).

The dualistic rhetoric on which the enterprise rests is Saussure's formalistic separation of *langue* from *parole*. The former is the

---

<sup>18</sup> Again, the reader will notice in the following many parallels with Goodman's work, and also the reciprocal proximity between a form of doing philosophy and doing literary theory -- as structuralists pursued it.

"underlying" system, the metapersonal rules -- a formal and abstract set of oppositional differences. The latter refers to the concrete *emanations* of the System, to behavior: the specific acts and utterances in speech and writing. (The separation runs parallel to Chomsky's distinction between *competence* and *performance*.) The distinction is also already methodologically invested: *langue* is the generative set of rules which can, of course, be formally reproduced by the patient taxonomist. Saussure's interest is not to discover *properties* of objects or events, but to discover the *differences* between signs within a *given* system: not positive *entities* but related series of abstract, ahistorical and oppositional terms. (The Saussurian principle of the code rests on the notion that "matter is only the instrument of *signification*, not the signifier itself."<sup>19</sup>) Following on from Saussure, both Jakobson and Lévi-Strauss will make these (idealized) binary oppositions the universal grammar of mind and the foundational syntax of all cultural products and meaning (including music, says Lévi-Strauss). Lévi-Strauss wants to unmask the "laws of symbolic thought," and Jakobson, the "grammatical structure of literature." It is their failure which is instructive.

---

<sup>19</sup> Culler, 1975:52.

#### 4.4 LÉVI-STRAUSS READING AND WRITING STRUCTURES:

Lévi-Strauss, like Dewey in the previous sections (4.1 and 4.2), is concerned with the distinction between nature and culture, and with how we *write* about it. But if Dewey sometimes appears more Lockean, Lévi-Strauss appears more *metaphysically* Hegelian: in the sense that the distinction between nature and culture is no longer a variable and concretely interactionist one (Dewey), but a dialectical opposition reiterating itself (structurally) in the *same* way in *every* culture and in *every* mind. I will look briefly at The Raw and the Cooked as that which attempts to mirror the structural *opposition* between the natural and the cultural, as that which attempts to set up a style of reading and writing structure as one meta-logic uniting all cultural domains in one linguistic (Saussurean) text-in-the-mind.

Meals, it seems to Lévi-Strauss, have a structure. Can it be that culinary patterns and interests reflect thoughts rather than purposeful practices? Do we organize certain foods in certain ways not so much because they are good to eat but because they are good to think, not pragmatic habits but mental structures? Yes, Lévi-Strauss would affirm. Foods are signs selected to convey cultural messages rather than practical proteins.<sup>20</sup> (Remember, signs do not have positive properties but *only* oppositional differences from one another.) Every community (and every

---

<sup>20</sup> My discussion here follows M. Harris, 1980: especially 188-190.

mind) unconsciously sends out messages coded in the medium of foods and their preparations.

The fundamental contrasts in this culinary semiotic are those between cooked, raw and rotted foods. Elevated (or reduced) to a linguistic and dialectical principle, cooked foods communicate in a language aligning the product on the side of nature *or* on the side of culture. Lévi-Strauss writes that boiled is aligned (structurally) with the cultural side, because to boil requires a pot, a barrier of water between the fire and the food. Roasting is a nature-sign because food and fire are in direct contact. The structural formula is:

roasted : boiled : : nature : culture.

The opposition between the raw and the cooked is a code for the distinction between nature and culture: voilà!

This also explains why guests would receive roasted foods (they're associated with nature) and close kinsmen get the boiled (they're the center of one's cultural life). With this universal mental formula (linguistic structure), Lévi-Strauss purports to support a prediction about cannibalism, both when strangers and relatives are being eaten. Kin are culture, so they ought to be boiled; strangers are part of the nature side -- to be roasted. (The logic here being dialectical, Lévi-Strauss does not explain why things could not be the other way round.)



Of course someone was bound to test this and see if cultures perform rather more in terms of prevailing pragmatic conditions, or indeed in terms of Lévi-Straussian structures, if they perform with *different* signs for *different* contexts, or indeed with one differential metalogic dualistically separated from even an interest in those contexts. And Paul Shankman found that in a sample of sixty cannibal societies, seventeen boiled while twenty roasted; and six both boiled and roasted. Twenty-nine of them ate out (ate strangers -- what Lévi-Strauss calls "exo-cuisine") and twenty-six ate in (ate relatives -- "endo-cuisine"), and five did both. But not only did they, contrary to Lévi-Strauss' structures, *vary* their preparations: for those who only used *one* form of preparation, being good pragmatists, they baked! "The most obvious finding of this study is that Lévi-Strauss' exclusive focus on the roasted and the boiled has been spoiled by the natives who have discovered a veritable smorgasbord of ways of preparing people."<sup>21</sup> In other words, the art of cooking is not the same as the art of linguistics. If asked whether structural oppositions are resolved *for the myth* or *for the native* (cook),<sup>22</sup> Lévi-Strauss chooses the former; for he does "not aim to show how men think in myths but how myths think in men, unbeknownst to them."<sup>23</sup>

The pragmatist, in contrast, would argue that cultures *cope* with signs. Lévi-Strauss has transformed coping into a linguistic game of mental imagery. But on the contrary, when *fuel* is short, then

---

<sup>21</sup> Shankman, 1969:61, cited by Harris, 1980:189.

<sup>22</sup> Boon, 1972:97, cited by Culler, 1975:150.

<sup>23</sup> Lévi-Strauss, 1969:20; and cited by Culler, 1975:150.

(in Asia) rapid frying is the method. When Indian women are working in the fields, cow dung provides cool and long-lasting flame for slow cooking.<sup>24</sup> What Dewey saw as a "variety of discourses and practices in communities adapting to different and changing situations," Lévi-Strauss reads (and writes) as "the structure of the human mind." But,

"what does this matter? For if the final aim of anthropology is to contribute to a better knowledge of *objectified thought* and its *mechanisms*, it is in the last resort immaterial whether in this book the thought processes of the South American Indians take shape through the medium of my thoughts, or whether mine take place through the medium of theirs. *What matters is that the human mind, regardless of the identity of those who happen to be giving it expression, should display an increasingly intelligible structure* as a result of the doubly reflexive thought movement of two thought processes acting one upon the other, either of which can in turn provide the spark or tinder whose conjunction will shed light on both."<sup>25</sup>

All myths become the *parole* of a general mythological *langue* (Saussure again). Platonic Dialectic (with echoes of the Meno above) returns in the Form of *langue*. That is, Lévi-Strauss' *own* thoughts become the evidence of the Dialectic process. The thoughts of a well fed idealist become the explanation of how other people attempt to eat. And applying linguistic structures becomes the technique for reading: reading not only what other people *do*, but how they *must* think. The more pluralistic and multiplied our discursive strategies, the more they all look the same: like one Mind. Lévi-Strauss argues that ". . . if the human mind is determined even in its creation of myths, *a fortiori* it is

---

<sup>24</sup> These are Harris' counter examples, *op.cit.*, 1980:190.

<sup>25</sup> Lévi-Strauss, 1969:13 (My italics.).

determined in other spheres as well."<sup>26</sup> Here one reads how structuralist linguistics has been transformed into idealist structures, into a *single* discourse, a *single* mentalistic text, into an elevated play of oppositional signs.

The linguistics kills two birds with one assumption: it provides not only the discovery procedure; it also solves the problem (by not asking the question) of the intertranslatability of multiple discourses and practices into the one meta-theory. Structure has become Lévi-Strauss' myth, put in everyone else's head. History becomes assimilated to language, and pragmatic questions are begged. Questions like: *why* a community chooses one discourse rather than another; why one functions or works well and another badly, powerfully and/or weakly; and why a *change* is made (presuming there are historical changes) which institutionalizes the survival of one discourse and the death of another. (This orientation of Lévi-Strauss prefaces post-structuralist practice in many important respects. Post-structuralists, as we will see, deconstruct structure, pluralize and aestheticize discourses, and make interpretation (of cultural phenomena and of texts) indeterminate: but they do not *contextualize* the "play of the signifier" in terms of the *pragmatic* issues of why certain discourses develop rather than others, of why the game is played with different conventions in different cultural spaces. In other words, an elevated textuality remains dominant; language *in toto* remains the dilemma. Philosophy may be a literary art, but an

---

<sup>26</sup> Lévi-Strauss, 1969:18.

eternally repetitive one because it problematizes language "itself.")

So, Lévi-Strauss elevates the power of the mind and unifies its products by appealing to an underlying semiotic structure which places these products within a differential system of signs provided in advance. Studying culture (and its artifacts) becomes analogous to studying a linguistic system; and this is where structuralist literary criticism would agree. In this sense, looking at unwritten myths and at well written poems becomes the same thing: i.e., looking at the products of a formal system. That is, Lévi-Strauss and Jakobson (in a moment) are instituting a style of *reading*: on the basis of a *rhetoric* of fundamental codes, grammars and oppositions. (As we will see, (chapter 6.) Schönberg, much "modernist" theory, and many Anglo-American syntax-driven aesthetic theories share the same predilections.)

#### 4.5 JAKOBSON, AND REFERRING TO FICTIONS:

But what sort of grammar is this? How does it structure its products? And how does linguistic analysis discover this grammar and its operations? Or, could it be that this grammar is itself an interpretational fiction, which, by being referred to, forms the basis of a certain style of reading and a genre of writing? Could it be that it is itself an artifice, a literary conceit, used to read and place other literary artifices, another attempt to escape rhetoricity through description, through describing something (a foundational code or system) which is the basis of *all* (literary) rhetorics or practices? What, then, does structuralism tell us about the sort of text linguistic analysis wishes to be considered as when it purports to be a *describer* of the nature of literary texts? (The same questions arise, of course, in the context of speech act theory, as it worries about the nature of fictional reference, truth functions, and the "mimetic nature" of literature: speech-act theory already being sure that it knows how to refer to what is distinctly "non-literary discourse," and that it is *itself* a non-literary discourse. But the following discussion will follow up the implications of structuralism primarily because its post-structuralist critics do more interesting things *with* it and, consequently, with philosophy than those that are being done with speech act theory.)

Parenthetically: The speech act theories of Searle (1969), Beardsley (1970), Ohmann (1971) and Pratt (1977), when



formalistically applied to literature, share a great many similarities to structuralism, and earn the same rebuke. The pragmatic criticisms of speech act theory made by Fish (1980), Margolis (1980) and Rorty (1982) are good cases in point. Searle wishes to idealize a distinction which will separate literary from non-literary discourse, and simultaneously institute a *descriptive* genre that will arbitrate between them: philosophy of language. On this basis, Beardsley writes that: "A poem is an *imitation* of a compound illocutionary act." (My italics.) And Ohmann follows the refrain: "[A] literary work is a discourse abstracted, or detached, from the circumstances and conditions which make illocutionary acts *possible*; [a literary work's] illocutionary force is *mimetic*."<sup>27</sup> (My italics.) Pratt makes gestures in the more pragmatic direction of distinctions of genre and *practice*, only to conflate such differences with different speech acts: the same story.

Performing background support for the project of setting up neatly distinct speech acts are the vague and homely "maxims" of Grice: "Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence. Avoid obscurity of expression. Avoid ambiguity. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity). Be orderly. Be relevant. Make your contribution as

---

<sup>27</sup> Ohmann attempts to make the notion of "style" explainable also within a theory of illocutionary force. In this regard, "[w]hat is important about Ohmann's errors is that they are always honorable and attractive; that is, they are made in an effort to stretch the theory so that it will do things we would like it to do: . . ." Fish: 1980:226. In other words, it is by attempting to absorb the various functions which different discriminations of style serve into formalistic speech-act units that one sees how easily style eludes the procedure.

informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange). Do not make your contribution more informative than is required."<sup>28</sup> (Recall Aristotle's restrictive recommendations to the rhetorician, p. 28.) These moral-linguistic manners then appear in the guise of analytic speech acts and rules, which philosophers, presumably, recognize as "normal" and conscientiously embody, and which count as the mark of their distinction *from* literature. Thereby, (with a few adjustments, and even more suspiciously) we end up with a system to be *applied* to bodies of work (literature) which violate this (stylistic) order all the time; which flaunt or construct their own evidence, exploit ambiguity and disruption, and mix their "speech acts" mercilessly. Borges not only purposefully mixes his acts, he undermines the assumption that one could (or should) separate them out and, therefore, stabilize and establish a style of writing (of philosophy) which professionalizes such misguided performances. He tells hybrid stories, of history and of histories of books, each making the other and reversing each other. He speaks (writes) with straight and grand metaphysical propositions out of the mouth of Leibniz, parodied to the point of the absurd in the form of the short-story miniatures in which they appear: grand metaphysical miniatures. He writes about a culture (who knows where) in which "[t]hey judge that metaphysics is a branch of fantastic literature," in which a philosopher's "book which does not contain its counterbook is considered incomplete."<sup>29</sup> His precursors are

---

<sup>28</sup> Margolis, 1980:242, culls these from Grice's "Logic and Conversation," in Syntax and Semantics Vol 3, (eds.) P. Cole & J. L. Morgan, N.Y.: Academic Press, 1975.

<sup>29</sup> Borges, 1964: "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius", pp. 34,37.

Zeno and Kafka, Berkeley and Chesterton. To "sort this out" with distinct speech acts would produce a most inappropriate rigor.<sup>30</sup>

Margolis also alludes to Borges (as do Rorty and Derrida) and comments that neither Searlians nor structuralists have "supplied us with a viable scheme of speech acts, on the basis of which we can say with any confidence which rules or maxims must obtain if discourse is to proceed felicitously. . . [I]t is impossible to show that all or most apparent violations entail incoherence or irrationality."<sup>31</sup> To this, Rorty adds that the search for speech acts which will distinguish literary from non-literary discourses is still a reiteration of the dream of distinguishing second-order language in literature from first-order language about the world, and a dream about a discipline and a meta-genre of writing (Philosophy) which would be in a position to adjudicate (Dialectics again). To this, Fish adds a purposefully illustrative joke, *using* speech act discourse not as a supplier of analytic structures but as a most "prestigious story,"<sup>32</sup> as a *drama*, even as the central dilemma of Shakespeare's Coriolanus. Fish persuades us that it is a "Speech Act play" about the rules of *conventional* performance (or

---

<sup>30</sup> But not to worry: Austin's own distinction between "constatives" (to describe truly or falsely) and "performatives" (the performing of an action) do not endure his own exploration of their separability.

<sup>31</sup> Margolis, 1980:243, 244. To this one could add that the more useful and modest hope, that Searle be able to distinguish between novels, philosophical speculations and advertisements, (let alone fiction and fact, with the use of speech-act theory), leads one to question what sort of heuristic function it could have. At best it constructs laborious ways of trying to distinguish different genres of linguistic use which we distinguish more easily without its help: i.e., through pragmatically assessed genres. (More on the issue of replacing the notion of "speech act" with the notion of "genre" in chapter 6, pp. 275-292.)

<sup>32</sup> Fish, "How to Do Things with Austin and Searle: Speech-Act Theory and Literary Criticism," 1980:239.

"performatives"), about the *social* price payed for obeying or ignoring those "rules" if one wants to be recognized as a member of the community. Speech acts, in Fish's text, become hermeneutic allegories about belonging, not classificatory facts discovered by philosophers and *imitated* by literature or literary criticism. And speech acts, in Rorty's text, are the creations of another (epistemological) attempt to establish a style of writing philosophy safely on the side of the *non*-literary, unbiased and descriptive.

And this (to return to structuralism) is also where Jakobson would like to be. He is sure that:

---

"Any unbiased, attentive, exhaustive, total description of the selection, distribution and interrelation of diverse morphological classes and syntactic constructions in a given poem surprises the examiner himself by unexpected, striking symmetries and anti-symmetries, balanced structures, efficient accumulation of equivalent forms and salient contrasts, finally by rigid restrictions in the repertory of morphological and syntactic constituents used in the poem, eliminations which, on the other hand, permit us to follow the masterly interplay of the actualized constructions."<sup>33</sup>

This is indeed somewhat surprising, and very hopeful: keeping alive the ambition that a *method* will escape its own rhetoricity by *describing* rhetorical or literary structure. This is achieved, firstly, by being "unbiased, attentive, [and] exhaustive." And we can be all of these by following a method which produces a complete inventory of the patterns objectively present in the text: and all of this without having to worry about the relevance or

---

<sup>33</sup> R. Jakobson, 1968:603.

value of these "unexpected" discoveries. But, by being asked to perform certain linguistic tricks on certain fictions, we are, at the same time, induced (*not* asked) to accept the legitimacy and prowess of a style of work which wishes to be recognized as something more: as the *describer* of the objective constituents of some *other kind* of writing: poetry.

This double ingenuity, of attempting to escape one's own generic relativity by descriptively proliferating the constitutive units of a "different" kind of product, a poem, is what structuralism does. But not without some interesting consequences. While reading, for example, Shakespeare's 129<sup>th</sup> Sonnet, Jakobson searches for and, of course, finds a grammatical parallelism, foregrounds it as the center of the poem, and infers from it a semantic and thematically inappropriate conclusion. What is interesting here is not simply that the structural positions, symmetries and subsequent analysis, are *displaced* (in importance) by the



*thematic* considerations through which we read them;<sup>34</sup> nor simply that in this specific instance Jakobson's distributional keys unlocked an implausible interpretation. (As Kuhn points out, finding mistaken details is not enough to make a theory, or style of reading, "incorrect" or uninteresting.) The problem is that Jakobson seems persuaded by his interpretation precisely *because* it has been *discovered* by "unbiased, exhaustive total description of [these] . . . syntactic constructions [and] striking symmetries:" i.e., by linguistic analysis.

So, it is not the prowess of the method which is in doubt. On the contrary, it seems that with a little technology and ingenuity one

---

<sup>34</sup> Cf. R. Jakobson, 1970:esp. 18-21; and J. Culler, 1975:71-74 for a close analysis of Jakobson's reading of this sonnet, and how he uses syntactic constructs to draw dubious semantic conclusions. The sonnet is as follows:

Th'expense of Spirit in a waste of shame  
 Is lust in action, and till action, lust  
 Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,  
 Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,  
 Enjoyed no sooner but despised straight,  
 Past reason hunted, and no sooner had,  
*Past reason hated, as a swallowed bait,*  
*On purpose laid to make the taker mad.*  
 Mad in pursuit, and in possession so,  
 Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme,  
 A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe,  
 Before a joy proposed, behind a dream.

*All this the world well knows, yet none knows well*  
*To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.*

By analyzing strophes II and IV (italics) as structurally parallel and equivalent constituents, Jakobson connects 'on purpose laid' to 'the heaven', thereby interpreting (deducing) that heaven's sovereign is the rascal who deliberately dangled the bait. It is the prioritizing of the parallelism which produces the dubious reading. The parallel between 'to make the taker mad' and 'leads men to this hell' convinces Jakobson that the fault lies with this unknown culprit (heaven), rather than (say) with men (the takers) who seduce *themselves* by not being able to move from one kind of knowledge to another: from knowledge of the bait to knowledge of how to prevent themselves from swallowing it. And Jakobson has followed suit, swallowed his own bait. He referred to a "syntactic structure" but slid over to a semantic conclusion. And this conclusion is certainly open to question.

can indeed "discover" numerous patterns and oppositions. But, it seems also that what one "discovers" (syntactic units) may bear little relation to the overall effect (semantic consequences) of the poem. Again, the *pragmatic* test of these distribution patterns takes place in the context of what we thought of the poem before we knew the structuralist was reading it. It is this which tells us if he is using his taxonomies, oppositions and distributions (or his list of different speech acts) correctly (that is, relevantly and persuasively). Poetic effects (*passim* Jakobson), like cultural effects (*passim* Lévi-Strauss) are what need to be explained (or at least methodologically considered). And these effects, or consequences, always seem more complex, indeterminate and open ended than (syntactically reductive) metaphors of "structure" imply, or which that genre of writing which hunts for such "structures" admits. (By "effects" and "consequences" I mean that what the reader draws out as a message (or as messages, or as meaningful relationships between "units") loops back to help us locate relevant units in its construction. Understanding of the "whole" helps reciprocally to discriminate the relevant parts which "determine" it. Jakobson wants (as R. Scholes, 1974:27, puts it) "a single universal description of communication acts" on the basis of his "discovery of syntactic essences:" essences which themselves, once dualistically separated from semantic effects (from meaning and the consequences a reader draws from such meaning), cannot then suddenly be called upon to supply a universally determinative foundation for those varied effects.)

For structuralism to work as a *practice*, to form an institution, it needed a discovery procedure: it needed to construct a grammar which would in different hands achieve identical results (i.e., achieve science). But this classificatory procedure has experienced "repeated failures." As Chomsky argues: "it is very questionable whether this goal is attainable in any interesting way, and I suspect that any attempt to meet it will lead into a maze of more and more elaborate and complex analytic procedures that will fail to provide answers for many important questions about linguistic structure."<sup>35</sup> The point here is not only that one might fail, but that the dream to work out such procedures might raise the wrong and most *useless* problems: it might set up a style of work in service of an "unwarranted belief" in complexity of the wrong kind, especially when this structuralist

---

<sup>35</sup> N. Chomsky, 1957:52-53, and cf. Culler, 1975:21.

vocabulary is applied to literature and other culturally *emergent* artifacts and processes.<sup>36</sup>

When the structuralist technology has success, locates "facts," and produces acceptable conclusions, this is only when they conform to what we already tacitly know (about reading various sorts of texts). Some foreknowledge determines what can be "discovered." Converting this into a formal representation might work, but only:

1. when such work is done on a *closed* corpus (and texts have kept opening up again with only a little concerted effort).
2. when the desire is to construct *inventories* of elements or units (useful indeed in warehouses, but less so in the "generative" and "transformational" context of flexible and dynamic linguistic (aesthetic) *practices* -- modernist and post-modernist literature being just such a context of practice which uses and is *about*

---

<sup>36</sup> This critique parallels Margolis' pragmatist view of Goodman's complex and technical uses of semiotics. Goodman moves from a post-carnapian formalism (The Structure of Appearance) to an interest in the "languages of art" without asking *how* and *why* and in what *circumstances* certain good and/or bad and/or *different* ways of symbolizing *emerge*. Goodman's interest is in achieving a "systematic discourse" within the *nominalist* context of an ontological relativism, but this is achieved irrespective of the pragmatic and cultural contexts within which semiotic practices function. In other words, Goodman assesses "works" too much in terms of questions of (notational and stylistic) *identities* (Languages of Art), separated "from aesthetic interest, from cultural intention, and from the emergent and shifting powers of historically contingent communities." (Margolis, 1981:426) It is good (I think Margolis would agree) to have a vocabulary which asks how symbols relate systematically to other symbols and systems of symbols, so long as it does not neglect the questions of why and in what circumstances and for what pragmatic reasons we attend to and functionally valorize the ones we do. Goodman's legislative wit is itself an important intellectual style which has provided the analytic tradition with a (non-epistemologically foundationalist) way to talk about science *and* art at the same time, but still within the limitations of a primarily taxonomic rhetoric. (More on this issue with respect to music and post-modern theory and practice in chapter 6.)

language).<sup>37</sup> 3. when one's goal is to relocate all *usage* in terms of elevated relations of *opposition* (as if, à la carte de Lévi-Strauss, food must be either roasted or boiled rather than (like a theory) perhaps only half-baked).<sup>38</sup> and 4. when one is fond of mathematics and wants a *calculus* to produce all possible combinations of a notational system; (which requires an enviably large amount of patience and intelligence, but produces a functionless amount of complexity).

#### 4.6 STRUCTURALIST CONSEQUENCES:

Structuralism has nevertheless produced a set of positive critical moves which have resonated widely in the literary-philosophical institution around it. As Rorty uses Dewey (recall p.140f.), so Derrida and others use structuralism: to criticize the tradition, offer a change of vocabulary, and increase our discursive space.

1. One important shift has been the structuralist reading of the sign, not as having a property but as constituted by its difference (within a *given* system) from other signs. Derrida drops the givenness (of the system) and sticks to *difference* in his analysis of onto-philosophical texts which attempt to provide themselves with a foundation on the basis of the priority of *one* sign (its property) over and against another. A foundation, Derrida writes, can only be approached *through* writing, through the difference

---

<sup>37</sup> It is interesting to note that structuralists seem to have found their job easiest when concentrating on the canonically stabilized literature of the tradition, where meanings were already well established and tacitly operative while they were uncovering their "determinative" structures.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Harris, 1980:188 for an elaboration of the joke.



*between* two signs: neither of which can take on a determinate function without being frustrated by its partner through which it is able to mean anything. When structuralists shift from ontological identity theories to semiotic concerns with differential relations, foundationalist identities (and identity theories) are made fluid, left oscillating indeterminately *between* signs. A singular and self-representative identity always breaks down into a dual relation *between* signs. Between the sign and what it signifies is always a gap which identity theories try to close *precisely* by using what opens it: the sign. Structuralists want, of course, to focus, not on meaning but on what they say structures it. Derrida does not adopt the separation of structure *from* meaning; but he does adopt the criticism structuralism makes against the possibility of achieving *full meaning*, of a sign, and/or of an interpretation of a set of signs (texts, scores, paintings, buildings -- whatever). Full meaning would posit what Derrida calls a "metaphysics of presence," which harbors the desire to find a truth (or truth function, or single meaning) behind every sign, a moment of "original plenitude" when, (like Peirce's "index"), form and meaning, structure and world, word and object, were simultaneously present in the sign and to consciousness -- indistinguishable, foundational. (For Peirce, of course, there was always a fundamental incompleteness to every sign, requiring an "interpretant" and an inquiry to complete it.)

2. Structuralism's shift from the subject to signifying systems also served the function of relativizing and rhetoricizing "intention."

Conscious intention was no longer the *a priori* provider of language, of its order, its meaning or its force. On the contrary, the subject was produced by the force field of signifiers. (In France this too was another swipe at Descartes, and also at phenomenology and existentialism.) The subject was "decentered," as Foucault would argue: signification could no longer be identified with, and/or mastered by consciousness. Through this decentering, the world of *language*, for post-structuralist theory, becomes and remains *the* exemplary dilemma, *the* philosophical totality over and against which one seeks to establish a style of meaningful reflection and criticism. This refrain, that man is a sign, is, in its pragmatic guise, a Peircean one: in its more metaphysically ponderous mood, a Heideggerian and Derridean one too. Heidegger claims: "Die Sprache spricht, nicht der Mensch. Der Mensch spricht nur, indem er geschicklich der Sprache entspricht." (Language speaks, not the man. Man speaks only insofar as he *artfully* bespeaks language.)<sup>39</sup> The point here is that this indeterminate "totality," once seen in a *post*-analytic (Rorty) and *post*-structuralist (Derrida) light, becomes, not the object of worry but the medium of art and play: the question is not "how is it (language) attached to the world and how can I as a subject master it?" but, "how well and for what can it be used?": "there is no getting out of language to the world itself or to the "I" itself, so what can we do with the worlds and I's that are made with it?" It is through this interest in the "artful" which eventually helps both Heidegger and Derrida

---

<sup>39</sup> Heidegger, 1957:167. (My emphasis and my translation: and it is a somewhat sloppy recommendation.)

into a new (albeit exceedingly difficult) philosophical idiom which moves away from "givens" in the structure of the subject, which stops postulating a consciousness above language, and stops making the subject that which structures philosophy. (Not new, of course, to Wittgensteinians. But it seems that it is a recent phenomenon that philosophers read *both* Continental and Anglo-American philosophy in order to relativize and rhetoricize its stylistic commitments. And it is structuralism which has had a larger impact on just *how* philosophy (or any text) can be read as a *literary* product, as an act of "troping.") (More on this in chapter 5.)

Regarding the more extended consequences of, and literary-philosophical *uses* of, structuralism, there have been four major effects: 1. The "decentering" of the subject within a semiotic decenters the author too. Texts are then read not in terms of how their producer controls them, but in terms of other texts: in terms of the *intertextual* relations which produce authors *and* texts. Both are disseminated equally into a destabilized network of signs. 2. The loosening of language from naturalistic and causally essentialist explanations into differential and semiotic relations helped literary criticism out of cause-effect talk. That is, it helped it to justify its distancing from literary history and biographical criticism as ways to answer questions of textual causality. By extrapolation, philosophical-literary critics too, like Rorty and Derrida, loosen their texts from the intellectual history of ideas (but not without concern for that history), in order to push in the

direction of different and more ironic narratives about the tradition, and about textual-causal propriety. They treat a philosophical style not as that which *belongs* to a sacred author or a controlling subject, but more as that which belongs to the critical discourse which taunts it. Their authors' names and biographies become figurative hooks on which to hang eclectic and critical stories: (as we have seen, both Kant and Wittgenstein are good examples of names which function this way (as stylistic figures) for Rorty; as do Nietzsche and Heidegger for Derrida). 3. Structuralism also *established a jargon*, (some of which is already in Peirce), which could itself be used figuratively and eclectically for discussing philosophical-literary works: sign, signifier and signified; structure and grammar; differential and oppositional relations. It provided a repertoire of different concepts to help get away from determinations of truth and meaning as the only acceptable goals of analysis. 4. It also provided, of course, an instructional program for studying all cultural artifacts as signs, as part of a semiotic investigation. It instructed also, therefore, to treat cultural phenomena as *functions* of language, as texts; thereby extending the range of literary analysis beyond highbrow poems to include *anything* that made an appearance in language: philosophical texts, advertisements, novels. A structuralist like Barthes would try his hand at all of these: no single one being treated as a special case, for special competence, subsisting outside of the reach of the linguist's rhetoric.

Structuralism's achievements, then, were not to be found in its discovery procedures, but as a set of metaphors, as a provocative set of questions, as a style of work and writing. Jakobson's "distributional analysis" of syntactical structures failed to reveal relevant semantic and thematic *effects*. Greimas' algorithm for the discovery of semantic effects started with smaller units which were then unable to explain the (wholistic) meaning of the larger ones. He left out the *reader* who interprets from the whole to the unit. (This is Eco's criticism: Remember *who* reads.) Todorov indeed applied linguistic categories more metaphorically and pragmatically to produce a "grammar" of narrative and of plot structure which would accommodate *different* narratives and plot structures. But he simply rediscovered his categories always hiding where he looked. Linguistics was a "method" used to reject evaluation and to produce rigorous irrelevance.

The strength of structuralism was its development of a form of attention which produced its own opposition: not a "deep" and ubiquitous structure, but plurality, indeterminacy and post-structuralism. Structuralism, like analytic philosophy, made its theoretical fiat, rigor and discipline the proof of its limitations. The codes and rules it discovered were those of its own artifice and style: not *the* conventions of literary or philosophical texts, but a way of *reading* them. And it is *this* form of attention, of how communities of readers *make* texts to perform certain theoretical functions (again, as Dewey remarked, p. 4, about the ways in which we could read Plato) which structuralism



engendered. The more specific consequence was the shift from "deep" principles (structuralism) to a "play of surfaces" (post-structuralism); but, unfortunately, they left out the pragmatic "middle." The text (philosophical or otherwise) became, as Barthes wrote, like an onion: "a construction of layers (or levels, or systems) whose body contains, finally no heart, no kernel, no secret, no irreducible principle, nothing except the infinity of its own envelopes -- which envelop nothing other than the unity of its own surfaces."<sup>40</sup>

That is, Structuralism paradoxically highlighted the force and power of a text to escape the closure of its own theory, escaping in more than one direction. And this occurred by its focussing on what eluded it: tiny, varied, multifunctional "units" of language as experienced by communities of readers.<sup>41</sup> Barthes, therefore, decides to opt out of "the law of method" and to phrase for literary criticism what Feyerabend is simultaneously articulating for the "natural sciences:" a rhetoric "against method."

"Some speak greedily and urgently about method. It never seems rigorous or formal enough to them. Method becomes Law, but as this Law is deprived of any effect that would be outside of itself (no one can say, in the "human sciences," what a "result" is) it always falls short. . . . As a result, a work that unceasingly declares its will-to-methodology always becomes sterile in the end. Everything takes place inside the method, nothing is left to the "writing," . . . the

---

<sup>40</sup> Barthes, "Style and Image", in Literary Style: A Symposium, (ed.), Chatman, S., 1971:10. (also cited by Culler: 1975:259.)

<sup>41</sup> Fish writes in this regard: "The experiential point [a pragmatic echo] is realized only through the agency of the structure it subverts, which becomes, in effect, the vehicle of its own abandonment." Cf., Fish, "Structuralist Homiletics," 1980:194.

searcher repeats that his text will be methodological, but this text never arrives. There is nothing more sure to kill research and sweep it off into the leftovers of abandoned works, nothing more sure, than method. At some point one has to turn against method, or at least to treat it without any founding privilege."<sup>42</sup>

Whereas Fish opts for the excluded pragmatic middle: "In Aristotelian terms, *everything is middle*, even where there are. . . all the *formal* signs of a beginning and an end."<sup>43</sup> He opts not for the structuralist's single grammar of all language, or for Peirce's single logic of inquiry, but for Dewey's "communities of inquiry" (or interpretation), justifying their arts (and artifacts) not by metaphysical arguments about their natural origins or structural beginnings, but justifying them perpetually from the middle, as rhetorical, as always already being used and interpreted.

Structuralists, like speech act theorists, write about an underlying system; and they read fiction as a problem because it *must* be based on it, but differently and more elusively than "normal discourse." The criticism, though, is not that there are no structures (formal or otherwise), but that there are *always* structures, always "linguistic artifacts with which we transact business for the sake of inquiry" (Dewey), always useful fictions with which communities refer (Vaihinger), always a *plurality* of "structures" useful for certain purposes, through which we always already know the difference between the sentences, "Holmes lived in Baker Street." and "This is a suspended illocutionary act." without having to convert the difference into a theoretical

---

<sup>42</sup> Barthes, *Tel Quel*, 47, 1971:9-10. (cited in Harari: 1979:10.)

<sup>43</sup> Fish, *Ibid.*, p. 195.

separation between the literary and the non-literary. In other words, there is no *a priori* structure in the head (Lévi-Strauss), or in language (Jakobson), which a privileged meta-genre of writing (philosophy) will discover without having produced it in the process. The consequences the post-structuralist writer-critic draws from this is that philosophy too is a style of writing, a genre of literature; that it is an artifice to be read and written about in a mood which doesn't imply that, (with a little more rigor, seriousness and fidelity to the tradition), Truth will be just around the next page, or that we will do a better job for our culture if we keep doing things the same way.

In this regard, the works of Borges are, for both Rorty and Derrida, illustrative examples of what post-Philosophical writing can be like; where "the universe (which others call the library)"<sup>44</sup> which is sought and built is not outside or prior to language. But, nor is Borges therefore less committed to re-reading that genre called philosophy in the interest of a good story. Borges *mixes* the genres; he plays them off against, with, as intertwined to, each other; he proliferates grand systems in short-story miniatures which ironize their illustrious histories. There is no lack of structures to refer to, but, rather, a multiplicity of stories or fantasies to refer to, to read and write on their behalf: and as a representative of *Truth*, no one is less absurd than the other. The edificational power of a Borges story *depends* on the genre of philosophy, on its voluminous efforts (and ironic failures) to

---

<sup>44</sup> This is the first sentence in Borges' "The Library of Babel," *op. cit.*, 1964.

escape artifice, to escape the book and the counterbook.<sup>45</sup> The structuralist, ironically, produces texts about an underlying text, fictions about the basis of fiction, theories about reading for something *behind* the productive act of reading. The casual shrug of the pragmatist is in recognition that the failure of structuralist (and speech act) work to provide a foundation for literature is also a *failure to provide one for themselves*: but the shrug is also in recognition that they are playing a rhetorical game which is optional. They write in a genre in which they recognize *each other*, as writers and readers using certain conventions, a certain vocabulary, playing out a certain game of distinctions: but, having disengaged all minds and signs (Lévi-Strauss) from any context of cultural function and use has also disengaged their work from the *social* arts and discourses most dear to the pragmatic rhetorician.

---

<sup>45</sup> It is in this sense, as Umberto Eco and John Barth argue (Cf. chapter 6.), that Borges proposes a post-modernist aesthetic -- mixing genres ironically without any one of them coming out on top.

### 5.1 PHILOSOPHY WITHOUT PRINCIPLES: WRITING CRITICAL TEXTS:<sup>1</sup>

What the contemporary pragmatist and the post-structuralist literary critic have in common is not finding it worrying that our critical tasks might not have something "deep" or general and/or ontologically constraining in common -- (No Carnapian foundation in science and, therefore, no unitary frame of reference for an Osbornian science of criticism).<sup>2</sup> To tease this out of the tradition the pragmatist (e.g., Rorty) reads James and Dewey, and the continental philosopher (e.g., Derrida) reads Nietzsche and Heidegger. The latter tradition has more rhetorical volume (Nietzsche); the former is more dapper (James). The latter tends toward cultivating an idiolect, the former toward sociable conversation. The latter prefers Wagnerian soloists, the former a many-parted Mozartian lyricism. In effect, the pragmatic style has a context which links it to social conscience, to conversational partners, and to a "community of interpreters:" (a theme linking Peirce, Royce, Dewey, Rorty,<sup>3</sup> and in contemporary literary

---

<sup>1</sup> Lifted from Richard Rorty's "Philosophy Without Principles," Critical Inquiry, March, 1984.

<sup>2</sup> Osborne, H., still seems to lament the absence of a "proved foundation" for criticism, as if the hope had been rewarded elsewhere (in science); in Aesthetics and Criticism, 1955, and more recently in The Art of Appreciation, 1970. Cf. also Margolis, "Prospects Regarding the Science of Criticism," 1985:esp. 126-126.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. especially Rorty, 1985, "Solidarity or Objectivity?," for a pragmatic account of the loss of objectivity (and an immediate and foundationally epistemological relation to *nonhuman* reality) as the *gain* for the community seeking to improve the practices of *human* reality.



criticism, Fish).<sup>4</sup> But both groups read texts, not objects. Their interest is more artful than epistemological, more active than principled by *a priori* "givens." In other words, interpretation does not need "outside" constraints, for it always brings along enough of its own." (Cf. Fish versus Abrams.)<sup>5</sup>

What is being questioned is that when philosophers begin to talk about "their" texts they often begin to "look" like objects for exegesis more than for criticism. That is, they prefer things to have a non-text (or, as Peirce put it, a non-sign) analogue to which their texts refer, hoping that their stylistics ("argument") still carry some descriptive privileges, because constructing an argument within a technical discourse is different (categorically) from telling a story within literary discourse. The hope is that the latter is rhetorical and the former is constrained by the non-rhetorical, that the genre of representing how we represent (of systematically ordering our "languages of art") is what philosophers do, while critics talk about "mere" non-referential writing. These philosophers don't seem to be as happy coming to critics as they are when critics come to them for knowing advice on what real-world (or, in Goodman's case, "rightly ordered") discourse is like: as if we have "discovered" what these languages are, we're just not quite sure what those other "parasitic" or (in

---

<sup>4</sup> Cf. especially Fish, S., "Interpreting the VARIORUM," in Is there a Text in this Class?, 1980, 171-172; and "Change," in Tamkang Review, 14, 1984:277-296, for his pragmatist account of "community" as the context within which changes and stabilizations of interpretation and interpretative technique are located.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. M.H. Abram's "The Deconstructive Angel," Critical Inquiry, Spring, 1977, and Fish's "not to worry"-response, in "Is there a text in this class?," *op. cit.*, p. 321.

Goodman's case) "less careful discourses" (they call them "fictions") are. (Cf. Searle versus Derrida, and Rorty's report of the mismatch.)<sup>6</sup>

The pragmatic critic sees philosophy too as a genre of writing (Derrida),<sup>7</sup> a heterogeneous genre, not an epistemological one; a genre with a social history, not a pristine innocence (Dewey).<sup>8</sup> The polemic here is against those philosophers who think they have been bequeathed a set of special problems, ontologically necessary, metaphysically given, and/or anthropologically transcendental (Nagel),<sup>9</sup> over and against those philosophers who have an institutional set of texts which they interpret and criticize, read in interesting and useful ways or in old and parasitic ways, by doing good or bad criticism. Literary-culture critics, on the other hand, turn "philosophical" when they talk *generally* about such operations as criticism and interpretation, when they write less about one world found than about interpretational world-making (Goodman).<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> J. Searle, "The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse," New Lit. Hist., 1975; R. Rorty, "Is There a Problem about Fictional Discourse?," Consequences of Pragmatism, 1982; "Deconstruction and Circumvention," Critical Inquiry, September, 1984:esp. note 12.

<sup>7</sup> "From Philosophy, rhetoric." writes J. Derrida in "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," Margins of Philosophy, 1982:209. (Orig. 1972).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Dewey, The Quest for Certainty, 1929, (a quest he urges is not innocent, and should be given up).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. T. Nagel's Mortal Questions, and his respect for ". . . the deepest and oldest of them.", 1979, xii.

<sup>10</sup> N. Goodman, Ways of Worldmaking, 1978.

Both the critic and the philosopher become pragmatic insofar as they acknowledge that there is not any one vocabulary which captures something generally necessary and True about all of our different critical tasks, which are after different things, being read in different ways. In other words, from the philosopher's canon: they are rather skeptical about finding an original Heideggerian phonetics of Being, groaning in Greek (occasionally in German), which constrains or contains us in one lump as "deep" readers (listeners). And from the literary critical canon: if one wants some identifiable Hirschian (i.e., Husserlian)<sup>11</sup> Text or a single Abramsian epistemology and logic for the interpretation of textual "objects," then the pragmatic/critical proposal will sound positively Stanley Fish(ey). In both the pragmatic and literary critical camps the interest is in the possibility of being disagreeable; and the "objectivist argument cannot supply a coherent account of *disagreement*" (Fish).<sup>12</sup> To the agreeable this proposal is not worryingly relativistic, but pluralistically constructive.<sup>13</sup> We can accomplish more by worrying

---

<sup>11</sup> Cf. E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Validity in Interpretation, 1967, The Aims of Interpretation, 1976. Hirsch hopes that "objective interpretation" is possible in terms of a distinction between "meaning" and "significance:" the former being determinable, and the latter being a negotiable value in relation to other things or contexts. This epistemological dualism is Husserlian in that the distinction (meaning/significance) is dependent on the claim that "if we could not distinguish a content of consciousness (meaning) from its contexts, we could not know any object at all in the world." (1976:3) In other words (Husserl's), texts ("intentional objects") have an "objective meaning" determinable as a "content of consciousness." This "science" is appealed to because Hirsch is convinced that we *need* to know "the right interpretation," rather than rest with achieving simply good and/or agreed upon interpretations. While Hirsch is polemicizing for this need, the pragmatist (e.g., Fish and Rorty) thinks the latter is not only all we'll get, it's all we need.

<sup>12</sup> Fish, *op. cit.*, p. 338.

<sup>13</sup> One of the pragmatically "healthy minded" calls this a "robust relativism." Cf. J. Margolis, "Robust Relativism," 1976:37-46.

metaphysically and ontologically about less. This is philosophy without principles, and with, therefore, the potential to be good and novel criticism.

## 5.2 PRODUCING TEXTS RATHER THAN DISCOVERING TAXONOMIES:

The question is then: what is a text; and in what ways are pragmatic and post-structuralist critics allied in their understanding of "textuality," in placing the literary at the center of critical discourse -- (indeed because it will provide no center, and admit to no single model of production or interpretation)? The rhetoricians relativized objects to schemas and styles; pragmatists agreed, and contextualized schemas to what we make and use rather than to what we find and obey. Structuralists added that what we make and use are literary products, texts. What they could not add was a vocabulary which captured the "nature of a text." They opted, therefore, (as post-structuralists) for a *positive* rhetoric of how we continuously *remake* texts in constructive ways (as artifacts), how we structure and unstructure texts as active readers. And Roland Barthes is an important figure who exemplifies this transition in the relocating of (philosophical, or other) texts, not in terms of their correspondence to some other reality (or to an author's intention), but more radically in terms of dislocating texts from the assumption that they have some given *internal* coherence which works to exercise itself on some otherwise unformed or unforming ideal (*external*) reader.

In this regard, Barthes makes seven pointed suggestions as to the dynamics involved in constructing what one might call a (philosophical) text. And he theorizes explicitly on the basis of not having a basis. As a consequence of the breakdown of traditional epistemology, Barthes is drawn to extend its fallout to the problem of how we constitute the very texts we are left with as the leftover loci of our failure to identify something foundational and objectifiable.

1. Firstly, a text is not an object. That is, it is not an atomically numerable and stabilized formation. It is, rather, constituted "within a methodological field," "experienced (and this is the pragmatic resonance) only in an activity, a production."<sup>14</sup> Like Trebizond in the Renaissance, who contextualized Dialectic within a *civic field* of interest (cf. p. 62), and Dewey, who put it within a *field of social action*, Barthes understands texts as contextualized within a vacillating field of other texts, in a roaming scene of cultural discourses, in which a Quine, for example, can become a deconstructor of analytic assurance and/or a reconstructor of

---

<sup>14</sup> Barthes, R., "From Work to Text," in Textual Strategies, ed. Harari, 1979:74,75. (The following six points are also culled primarily from this text.)



empiricist hope; but he cannot be *intelligible* in either case except within the web of others' corroborating or critical texts.<sup>15</sup>

2. Texts (like artworks) do not necessarily fit into *ready-made* genres. Rather, they are often motivated to, and read in terms of the motivation to, *subvert* categories which take on the character of the *a priori*. The polyglottal voices of Joyce are written out of many genres -- the Homeric, the Aristotelian, the Irish -- separately ready-made, together subverting the ready-made. He writes in order not to be a "realist," like Nietzsche not to be a Metaphysician, and Rorty not to be a Philosopher. In other words, even when read within an available genre, the "modern text" (when *produced* by the "modern reader") is the attempt (especially in French theory) to subvert the given order of precedent. (Barthes' model (and Derrida's too in some respects) is Bataille, in the same way as Emerson is Dewey's: poets and philosophers, neither one nor the other, but, by subverting the *onto-generic* difference, both. (For French theory, "subversion" is synonymous with what is quintessentially "modern" -- a context

---

<sup>15</sup> In other words, the author too is a figure whom the critic constructs, on whom he hangs his reading: and as was already mentioned on p. 166, this is precisely how Derrida and Rorty read. And following from this, it seems that Quine can be read in either or both of the two aforementioned ways, as deconstructor or reconstructor. For example, in Quine's (and Ullian's) The Web of Belief, no analytic foundation is being explicitly proposed, but the alternative "web of belief" is talked about less in terms of the constructive power and social/textual dimensions of "the web" than in terms of encouraging the hope that smaller units of "empirical evidence" and "judicious application of logic" can still be appealed to as the decisive factors in adjudicating between competing beliefs. I am not saying this is wrong, but that the book can support some very different readings depending on the other texts it is read in the context of: in the context of Carnap, it reads as a sociology of knowledge; in the context of Rorty, it reads as a didactically late analytic appeal to watered down canons of empiricist logic.

in which reading the tradition is understood from the start as a cultural competition to resist precedent. When referring to this adversarial position, as will become clearer in chapter 6, I will refer more specifically to "modernist" sentiment, rather than simply "modern.")<sup>16</sup>

3. A text is a system, but without beginning or end, without "closure," always being interpreted and open to new interpretations which "decenter" older ones (to use the jargon). To wit: the Nietzsche industry, and the difference between the American (Kaufman and Danto to Nehamas), the French (Deleuze and Derrida to Foucault), and the German (Adorno and Horkheimer to Habermas) reopenings of Nietzsche's prose; openings which are themselves the demonstration of point 2.: That is, they are being performed through the *interplay* of the destabilized genres of philosophy *and* literary theory -- (or, in

---

<sup>16</sup> It is Lionel Trilling who dubbed the "modern" (in literature) as the fostering of an "adversarial culture." Cf. "On the Modern Element in Modern Literature," 1966.

Habermas's case, due also to his worry about this destabilization and interminability).<sup>17</sup>

4. What follows is that a text is *plural*, not because meanings are ambiguous, philosophers don't eschew all their metaphors, and poets don't keep their illocutionary acts straight; but, as Barthes reminds us, because a "textus" is itself "woven," an interweaving of other texts (what Derrida calls a "fabric of grafts"), quoting without quotation marks. And quoting is itself not mimetically representational, but selectively refashioning, a reading of readings, not restricted by notational structures, but by the histories we tell of the threads which precede and exceed the text. ("Excess" and "supplementation" are key notions (tropes) used to express the layerings that texts compound onto themselves, as

---

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Habermas, "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Re-Reading *Dialectic of Enlightenment*," *New German Critique*, 26, 1982:13-30, which centers on the different trajectories Horkheimer and Adorno, (of the "Frankfurt School"), and the French post-structuralists (by whom Habermas means Deleuze, Foucault and Derrida) take when reading Nietzsche. For Habermas, the question of how we read the nature of "enlightenment reason" hangs precisely on how we read the paradoxical nature of a "totalized critique" (Nietzsche's) which attempts an "assimilation of reason to power with a theory of power which, instead of truth claims, retains only the rhetorical claim of the aesthetic fragment." Habermas' hope is that one can salvage something of "enlightenment reason" from both Horkheimer-Adorno and the French by proposing a re-reading of Nietzsche (which is where they all go "wrong"), and by presupposing an "ideal speech situation" which can not be assimilated totally by the coercions of "power-discourses" (Foucault). I would sympathize with Habermas' worries *if* "reason" were indeed something communities suddenly stopped bothering to construct, and/or if some point outside those communities were available from which one could distinguish "our reason" from "the ideal and uncoercive speech situation." But it is because communities always do construct or take up this space, that it seems unnecessary to hypostasize a transcendental "ideal speech situation" as an "inescapable pragmatic presupposition." The working assumptions of speech situations (like reading situations) *are* pragmatic precisely because they are not groundable by transcendentals, closable by "texts themselves" (*passim* Barthes), or escapable by recourse to an ideal (external) speech situation. (On Habermas' view of the "post-modern," cf. chapter 6, p. 214ff.)

opposed (directionally) to the metaphorics<sup>18</sup> of "uncovering" and "laying bare" some elusive "core" to a text: In other words, the jargon of (interpretational) addition rather than subtraction or (taxonomic) reduction characterizes the post-structuralist *plurality* of texts.)

5. A work -- (an aesthetic notion which Barthes attempts also to open up through his discussion of the "text") -- is caught up in a process of "filiation." That is, we tend to place works into "external" categories, cultural histories, and geographical locations as ways of identifying them. And we, thereby, allocate the *meaning* of the work to an author, to an "internal" and generative control over the range of allowable interpretations.<sup>19</sup> What is epistemically and hermeneutically loosened when the work becomes a text is the *indeterminability* of what is external and what is internal, of what is outside and what is inside a text. (Derrida expresses this as the "folds" of a text, being turned inside out and outside in.)<sup>20</sup>

6. When a work is considered as a "text" it is also an object of "consumption." Both Barthes and Derrida refer to this multi-

---

<sup>18</sup> "Metaphorics" is just another general term (like "narrative") to refer positively to a vocabulary and a style which cohere; but also to refer "negatively" to such a vocabulary and style as having certain root images *without* foundations, which do not correspond to anything other than what they become when written out and applied.

<sup>19</sup> Cleanth Brooks, in The Well Wrought Urn, 1947:159, resists the idea that he might be "discovering" complexities not intended by the author (poet) on the "basis" that "the poet knows precisely what he is doing," and, therefore, that Brooks knows precisely what the poet knows: Quite a feat.

<sup>20</sup> More on Derrida and his application of a "textualist" reading of the "self-consuming artifacts" of philosophy following.

functional image; in one sense because it is an economic metaphor, a market image. This implies that a work is acquired and circulated through a public machinery (not the artist's "intention"), and is *accompanied* by a (reviewer's) rhetoric which makes it available for consumption and use. And what profession does not have a (journalistic) format for providing this function of paraphrasing (or photographing, quoting) to mediate the work's public dissemination? But the image (consumption) is also used to break down the traditional *distance* between the writer and the reader, the work and the reception (and the concomitant "problem" of how to bridge the "gap" when psychologized, and made into a problem of discrete "minds" meeting, as in Collingwood). A work is consumed in the sense that the reader takes part in producing the text, in completing it (like Peirce's interpretant completes the function of the sign). Consumptive refashioning is also an image of what the critic does. As art transfigures and refashions "the world," so too does the art of critically reading "the text" transfigure it.

7. Another aspect of Barthes' many suggestions, and one which links him to the arts and to the sophists, (that is, to Plato's and Aristotles' worries about them both), is the notion of "pleasure." The choice of a text, and of the context within which it is read or reworked, is "linked to enjoyment" (*jouissance*). This is the (gallic) flip side of saying that language is not pinned down and constrained by some non-human reality to which it conforms. There is room for play, for signifiers to circulate amongst



themselves; that is, the work is not exhausted by linguistic analysis and serious argument. The pleasure,<sup>21</sup> the game, as Plato says, is part of what moves him to convert Socrates to writing (Recall p. 26.), and moves many to read the effort. Enjoyment, Barthes holds, is one of the post-modernist consequences of exchanging theories of Truth for skill at reading, of exchanging obsolete "messages" for good taste, epistemology for aesthetics; or, in Dewey's terminology, it is a consequence of "exchanging static essences for enjoyed meanings and artifacts."

---

<sup>21</sup> Barthes distinguishes, in this regard, between *jouissance* and *plaisir*.

### 5.3 AESTHETICIZED TEXTS AND PRAGMATIC READERS:

If philosophy, then, is not a finder of *a priori* "objects" but a maker of texts, then "philosophy (writes Dewey) is inherently criticism:"<sup>22</sup> And the pragmatist is interested in being a "worldly" critic (Cf.Said.).<sup>23</sup> His canon is not restricted to that of the literature department or the philosophy department, because a text is not a possession or a "thing." Making it such a closed and singular unit would be asking that it be offered as the new replacement for the lost, autonomous, contextless "object" of the Epistemologian. Barthes writes that a text is to be understood as something constituted within the activity of criticism. For, as Fish writes, "[w]e do not have free-standing readers in a relationship to an equally free-standing text" (Fish).<sup>24</sup> The need to objectify the text, to make it a self-sufficient and constraining closure, is the concomitant "cartesian anxiety" (Bernstein) that there is a free-roaming contextless Subject whose noumenal agility needs phenomenal amounts of objective constraint. The point is that these two fabrications entail each other, and fall at the same time -- within the *community* who reads and writes them.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Dewey, "Existence, Value and Criticism," Experience and Nature, 1929, Dover Edition 1958:398.

<sup>23</sup> Said's "worldly" criticisms of Ricoeur (p.165) and Riffaterre (p.166) as summarized on p.188 strongly parallel Dewey's "worldly" criticism of metaphysical philosophizing: Said, *op. cit.*, 1979.

<sup>24</sup> Fish, S., "How to Recognize a Poem When You See One," *Ibid*, p.332; and on p.327 he writes: "Interpreters do not decode poems; they make them."

<sup>25</sup> Bernstein, R., Beyond Objectivism and Relativism, 1983, offers a good pragmatic assessment of the surplus urgency of an inflated "cartesian anxiety" which worries about how (*epistemologically and ontologically*) to relate the reader (subject) the the text (the object).

What many find ambivalent about Fish's brand of interpretational pragmatism is that he doesn't lament the loss of a theoretically unified view of interpretation or of the text, that he treats the seriousness of the lament with ironic levity, that he doesn't *want* to reconstitute a golden age of science and order. He treats the fear of a relativistic apocalypse as already lavishly redundant and leveled out within already operative and eclectic styles of interpretational *practice*. The multicentered text is part of a multicentered culture. The superfluity of denying this in theory or in style is what gives Fish's work the insouciance of the self-confessed pluralist without even a sense of the antagonism so dear to dialectical and modernist aesthetics. He is a gleeful Gorgias in post-modern garb who works hard not to achieve the wrong thing: an objective basis which a theory discovers and enforces, rather than a useful rhetoric which a community finds persuasive.

The point here will not be simply to keep kicking the dead (or at least haggard) horse of foundational epistemology (through vague images of textuality), nor simply to say that art is the leftover or new model by default. It will be to say also that post-structuralist literary theory, like post-modern aesthetics and (pre- and) post-analytic pragmatism, are parallel rhetorics about the loss of an intellectual-cultural center which *a* discourse (philosophy, say) cannot, and should not try to, recover. They are styles of work which do not try to rehabilitate the old hope of a center with the new jargon of structure: "The structure of X is . . ." is not only a

question that is not being answered; it is not being asked. And not asking it is not something to be worried about, but, rather, a "worry" to be circumvented in favor of the production of a different sort of "text:" i.e., what Quintillian called the rhetorical, Dewey the experimental, what Rorty has called the conversational, and Fish the persuasive. The more specific interest in Fish's work has to do with the use that can be made of his writing about literature for the writing and reading of a philosophical text. That is, literary theory talks about reading and writing, it foregrounds the assumptions in terms of which much reading gets done. It simply helps thematise what philosophers practice but usually don't thematise: i.e., their conception of a discrete text as that which "contains" what it is they try as readers to understand and extract -- the "argument."<sup>26</sup>

The pragmatic-literary proposal is that the entities which populate a text (like those which populate a world to which texts "refer") come into being as communally useful presuppositions, as discourse-specific entities. So, when asked what we are now to do with the old constituents: author, work, genre and canon (like rational, sensible, truthful and argument), the answer is, nothing. The point is to tell a story about what these categories have been an attempt to provide, and to ask if they are responsible for

---

<sup>26</sup> The text has been opened up in the sense that "the distinction between text and context is impossible to maintain (Recall Hirsch, p. 175 n.<sup>11</sup>.) and cannot be the basis of demarcating alternative theories with their attendant consequences. In short, no text reads itself, and anything you decide to take into account -- any supplement (Recall Derrida, p.181f.) -- is a text;" in Fish, "Consequences," Critical Inquiry, March, 1985:446. (My parenthetical reminder of Hirsch, and of Derrida's notion of the "supplement").

providing the sort of service asked of them. They are not being "falsified," but fictionalized. They may not be less useful because they weren't found, but made. They may not be "necessary fictions" (in Vaihinger's sense), but in some *specified context*, "superior fictions" (as Fish puts it). So, when the philosophical aesthetician says that a certain (indeed sensible) feature of a work, or the rationality of a discourse, is independent of an interpretational model and prior to it, these are not two steps in an argument: "they are one assertion said twice," in a rhetoric looking unnecessarily for a way out of itself, out of its own productivity. When reading a philosophical text, therefore, as rhetorical, the question[s] of independence and priority do not arise; for they are precisely what the text bring into view, and fictions (constructs) to which a community of agreeable readers gives assent.

The dream of finding independent and prior formal facts (non-fictions) from which we build up to discourse, interpretation and criticism has got it backwards. We are already using an interpretationally skilled discourse before we go hunting for facts and formal units. As we saw regarding Lévi-Strauss and Jakobson, the conclusion is not that there are no formal patterns ("entities," "properties," or "analytic concepts" -- *passim*



Mothersill<sup>27</sup>), but that there are always such; now you see these, now you don't, depending on our models and what they are after. In other words, the conventional categories of literary discourse (poem, poet; novel, novelist), like those of philosophical discourse (the argument, the man of reason; the system, the systematizer) make available the things about which they speak. These are not

---

<sup>27</sup> Mothersill's recent *Beauty Restored*, 1984, proposes a conceptual analytic which presents a very elegant and closely knit neo-Kantianism, refereeing essentially Anglo-American philosophical aesthetics only up to about 1969, (but in the context of an indeed very broad range of historical prefiguration: Platonism, scholasticism, Kantianism). My difficulty is that a conceptual analytic "works" only when it is uninterested in history, when it disembodies the "concept" from the vicissitudes of criticism and use, when it already takes for granted that philosophy is accomplishing something by "aufheben[ing]" "a rational principle," (as if this had ever been what *settled* controversy). The point here is *not* that "beauty" cannot acquiesce into "a formal definition," become "timeless" (as Mothersill writes), especially when one, by failing to specify a context, means any and all contexts: but what do we *gain*?. In this sense I am arguing what Mothersill would call "the anti-theorist position," but not because aesthetics is in a bad way and can't raise itself to the level of "systematic discourse," to "Theory," but because it is never any worse off than the philosophy which writes it: and *philosophy* cannot unify or elevate *itself* with an act of Theory and *then* treat another domain as its understudy. Do we, as Mothersill holds, "need a definition of aesthetic predicates," if this means achieving them by leaving their varied artistic contexts behind? Mothersill produces an admirably thorough, updated and repolished relic, a superbly "dysfunctional" clarity. What does "a definition of general aesthetic predicates" accomplish but the restoration of a style of writing *Philosophy* (re-writing Kant) which is still concerned to offer this sort of performance? Her (Kant's) project, to get off the ground, only requires "that we agree. at least on the necessary conditions for applying the predicate . . ." Well, if this were agreed upon, we wouldn't have any dispute. For the analytic apparatus to get going it takes as its basis the problem it said it was going to solve. It starts by drawing boundaries the crossing of which is precisely what we (communities, especially competing aesthetic communities) do, and what makes the conceptual extraction irrelevant; but worse, it is as if it is only by drawing such artificial boundaries that we can come up with a genuine and big enough question to call philosophical, as if only a form of conceptual essentialism (the restoration of "beauty") could restore its utility to aesthetics, make both *properly* "theoretical." What I am polemicizing against is making aesthetics the lackey of this form of philosophizing, rather than making this form of philosophizing an expendable art, one which our communities of interpreters do not find, and have never actually found, the "basis" for what they *do*.

*given* generic standards and standards of adjudication, they are, as Dewey put it, negotiable and "ongoing accomplishments."

Bernstein's notion of the "cartesian anxiety" and Fish's of "worrying about losing constraints" point out from different directions the same confusion between pragmatic and metaphysical dependencies. The worriers assume that the "text and the reader are independent and competing entities whose spheres of influence must be defined and controlled."<sup>28</sup> Even Barthes' (and Derrida's) argument for the *total* indeterminacy of a text is still a *metaphysical* argument for the irreducibility of the intertextual to the textual object; for it is *communities* of readers which already provide context for the occasional "*perchings*," as well as the "flights" (James) toward indeterminacy, which interpretations and, therefore, textual "objects" undergo.

The revival that Dewey's philosophy undergoes in Fish's literary theory has to do with the point that when writers about meaning set up the problem of how it gets determined, this can only become a problem if there is a point at which the "subject" finds a determination has not yet been made: There is no such point.<sup>29</sup> What Abrams, amongst others (e.g., George Steiner) worry about (when attacking Derrida) is that the reader might somehow linguistically and socially lose touch, get lost. They are trying to make old cartesian Philosophy a necessity for ongoing criticism,

---

<sup>28</sup> Fish, "Introduction; or How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love Interpretation," *Is There a Text in This Class?*, 1980:12.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Fish, "Is There a Text in This Class?," *Ibid.*, p. 310.

converting creative literature back into used up philosophical assumptions.<sup>30</sup> They are in that tradition (community) which produces an ontological distance between one's receiving of an utterance and the determination of its meaning,<sup>31</sup> and then worries about how to re-close the gap they made. The pragmatic post-structuralist is not challenging them with a more correct theory of the subject and/or the object; he's consoling them (in the style of James). There is no gap to worry about. No meta-constraints are required to fill in a ditch which communities never leave empty.<sup>32</sup> (Or, as James put it, a more abstract coat isn't needed if we already have one which fits. Cf. p. 113, esp. n<sup>42</sup>.)

What Goodman writes about logic when he is looking particularly pragmatic is what Fish (like James) writes about interpretation: in effect, that all this may look like a circle, but it is not a vicious one; rather, "this circle is a virtuous one. . . . A rule is amended if it yields an inference we are unwilling to accept; an inference is rejected if it violates a rule we are unwilling to amend."<sup>33</sup> In other words, Goodman's "we," the community, doesn't let one (all the way) down; it makes it unnecessary to say how it is we ever begin (to interpret),<sup>34</sup> to say what "prior" and "independent"

---

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Fish, "Normal Circumstances, Literal Language, Direct Speech Acts, the Ordinary, the Everyday, the Obvious, What Goes without Saying, and other special Cases," *Ibid.*, p. 268.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Fish, "Is There a Text in This Class?," *Ibid.*, p. 318.

<sup>32</sup> Fish's point ("Undoing the Case for Reader-Response Analysis," 1980:164) is that "you make sense . . . as soon as you can." There is no delay. This has to do with what Barthes, in Writing Degree Zero, calls "the spontaneously functional nature of language."

<sup>33</sup> Goodman, Fact, Fiction and Forecast, 1955:67.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Fish, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

foundations "ground" such practice, or what it is which makes a version change, or what sort of argument or practice could "reveal" the "hidden" truth responsible.<sup>35</sup> The variety, like the stability, of texts and styles of working with them are functions of the spaces which the strategies of our interpretational communities engender. Interpretational change and/or stability is not a function of the world itself nor of the *text* itself prior to being read: they are the very shape of reading.<sup>36</sup> Fish's point is that if a community believes, for example, in only one text, say, the search for the fundamentally True (Dialectic), or the rational discovery of the Real (Science), then the strategy they employ will be forever writing it: They will say, for example: "That too was an instance of falsification." (Popper) If some upstarts come along and produce another text, a change in rhetoric, or style, or paradigm, the protectors of the "true text" will call them nasty names like "relativist", "nihilist" (Steiner's relentless cry. And Danto agrees.), "pragmatist," "deconstructionist infidel," "enemy of society" (Popper again); while the other group might shout back names like "metaphysician," "foundationalist," "mannerist," "modernist tyrant".

The conclusion to such outbursts will be the lack of one. The work or text "itself" and the authority of the tradition into which it gets placed (Plato as epistemologist, or Plato as playwright) will not

---

<sup>35</sup> On the issue of change and how it is conceptualized within the notion of "community", cf. Fish, "Change," Tamkang Review, 14, 1984:277-296.

<sup>36</sup> In other words, reading is not a "machinery of extraction" performed by socratic mediators. Again an analogy: as philosophers have "ways of worldmaking," they have what Fish calls "ways of reading," through which they make and order their texts, form canons, make traditions.

effect a reconciliation or perform arbitration. The debate will not prove who has the truth: rather, the debate will be the "proof" of one's membership in one or another interpretational sect, productive of a nod of recognition and familiarity from someone else in the group. And this will show what neither group could *show* the other: that this is a *good* way to interpret, to read and write, for the time being. As the competition is between *communities* (usually with names like analysts, relativists, or whatever), legislating necessary and fundamental units and/or styles of analysis as binding for any reading of any text or work (the epistemologist and/or formalist again) will be both unhelpful and unnecessary. The law need not be invoked when persuasion is what does or does not do the trick. The call back to the work itself (. . . "but what Wittgenstein actually said was . . .", or " . . . but what Manet really painted was . . .") can only have rhetorical power over those who are already persuaded by a version, and that whosever interpretational work it was should not be betrayed.

The pragmatist manoeuvre, when threatened with the "text itself" and the objectivist's reproaches (nihilist, relativist, etc.), is not to counter with another total account of the nature of interpretation (any more than James and Dewey tried to offer another total account of Truth); it is to parry, by simply producing more compelling, richer and persuasive renderings of our cultures' most esteemed styles and works, or by *not* producing renderings of the ones thought to have died. As one can stop repainting



Rembrandts, one can stop re-writing Descartes into the "structure" of our "precarious" relationship to textual objects, and compensate, on the other hand, by making the objects "given," the same in every reading situation. With Abrams and Hirsch we need an object;<sup>37</sup> with reader-response, a subject; with pragmatism, a community with doesn't let them become totally separate in the first place: what we have (if anything), writes Rorty, is solidarity, not objectivity.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> When M. H. Abrams, "The Deconstructive Angel," 1977:434, poses the rhetorical-moral question, "if . . . all texts can engage only with a critic's own misconstruction, why bother to carry on the activities of interpretation and criticism?," he presumes that some true construction is possible as a way to match up the text itself and the critics model, and that this text itself (the object) will perform the comparison; and he presumes, on the other hand, that an (ultimately) indeterminate conclusion to interpretation rules out any reason to interpret (provisionally) at all.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Rorty, 1985, "Solidarity or Objectivity?."

#### 5.4 PARADIGMS LOST,<sup>39</sup> AND CONTINUED ARTISTIC USAGE:

It is Derrida who most thoroughly turns the philosophical community, its tradition, its canon, into an *art* historical series, into an etymological collage of paradigms lost, to be regained as metaphors, as textual echoes, as a new and different sort of work -- "intertextual," as has been said. (And finding a critical idiom to deal with this movement is no less difficult.) It is Derrida who extends the two-way *reciprocity* of the aesthetic and the philosophical more relentlessly than most; who, therefore, presses the reader to engage in an act of re-framing the way[s] in which a philosophical text can be understood as such, and how it *interacts with* the artworld. What makes this engagement and the questions it raises interesting is due precisely to Derrida's *writing*; because it is difficult, not immediately assimilable by the evening news or the dictionary of philosophy; because he writes not just about, but *out of* the artworld as a philosophical participant in the stylistic-thematic shifts of modernist and post-modernist aesthetics.

In other words, one cannot simply summarize Derrida's "argument," anymore than one can easily summarize the "point" of Joyce's Ulysses. The point, therefore, will be nevertheless to subject him to the injustice of paraphrase, and to place him in the path being charted from classical rhetoric, -- (to which Derrida

---

<sup>39</sup> The joke is borrowed from M. Harris, Cultural Materialism: The Struggle for a Science of Culture, 1980:21, who borrows it from Keesing, "Paradigm Lost: The New Ethnography and the New Linguistics," Southw. J. of Anthropology, 1972.

often refers, especially regarding the philosophical tradition's [failed] attempts to master metaphor, to contain *its* own metaphors and rhetoric within a discourse which depends upon them), -- to the pragmatic and post-modern. And in the context of this placing it will be asked what pragmatic consequences one might draw out as to how one criticizes the tradition, how one writes philosophy in so doing, and what the stylistic links between art, philosophy and rhetoric look like as an outcome.

Derrida is as connected to the contemporary artworld as he is to the philosophical community. And he criticizes the latter tradition as an artist would criticize his: likewise, his style and technique as a critic *are* also his theory and his work, or text. As repainting or imitating Picasso's *Guernica* could only be read as ironic or parodic, so too writing in the style of Kant or Hegel about art would also be read as stylistic training in terms of a dead master, or as philosophical self-parody. In other words, as difficult as it is for the philosopher to continue searching out real and worrying metaphysical prigs (as Rorty suggests), achieving literary naiveté is even more so.<sup>40</sup> Hence Derrida *practices* his aesthetics to reaffirm performance over the descriptive unity and closure of a System. He re-writes the tradition with the same sort of attention to and alteration of technique as the modern and post-modern writer exercise regarding literature: that is, he reads texts not as representations but as rhetorics.

---

<sup>40</sup> Rorty, 1984b:2.

Reading and writing from a (French) post-structuralist position means that Derrida understands the notion of metaphor through Aristotle's attempts to control it, and through Anatole France's dialogical criticisms of the metaphysician's "usure" of metaphor in so doing.<sup>41</sup> He understands the functions and conventions of Graeco-Western discourse through Nietzsche and Heidegger, and through Antonin Artaud's violent attempts to overcome these conventions through drama, through the theatre.<sup>42</sup> Derrida writes Glas like a philosophical Finnegans Wake, like a Borgesian interlingual labyrinth, a book and counterbook at the same time -- "without imitation, without verisimilitude, without truth or falsity," in which one finds only "traces, foretellings, recallings, fore-blows and after-blows which no present will have preceded or followed."<sup>43</sup> Derrida has been as close culturally to Parisian Surrealism as he has been (critically) close to Anglo-American

---

<sup>41</sup> "Usure" is a good example of one of Derrida's philosophical puns: it means both usury, (an acquisition of too much interest), and using up, (the deterioration through usage). It is an economic metaphor used to highlight the irreducible exchange of profit and loss involved in the philosophical metaphor, in "the ruining of the figure," which must first have and then lose its metaphoricity to become foundational -- what Nietzsche called the *Abnützung* of the figure. And Derrida's "usure" runs parallel to Nietzsche's "Abnützung." (Cf. p. 11 n.5.) In other words, the metaphysician attempts to profit from the loss. On the "general economy" of philosophical metaphors, cf. "From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism without Reserve" in Writing and Difference, 1981:251-277. On Derrida's "usure" of France's "The Garden of Epicurus," cf. "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy" in Margins of Philosophy, 1982:210 ff. and the translator's remark, p. 209f, n2. (By way of contrast, Dewey's use of the concept "use" is broader, more practical and less metaphysically punning than Derrida's "usure." More on this difference following.)

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Derrida's "The Theater of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation" in Writing and Difference, 1981:232-250.

<sup>43</sup> For a brief discussion of the affinity between Joyce and Derrida, between Shaun the postman and Derrida's *facteur* (factor, purveyor, postman) of truth, cf. McGill, A., Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida, 1985:290.

speech acts;<sup>44</sup> as close to Saussure's linguistic abstractions as to Valéry's and Mallarmé's poetry. His metaphors wander exegetically through close readings of the root metaphors of philosophical texts, helping them undermine the containment and order they initially impose, by reading them also as literature, as rhetoric. In other words, and more to the purpose of this work, Derrida writes *out of* an aesthetic which Philosophy fails to frame, conversing with non-philosophical centers of culture, and reapplying them to an understanding of the philosophical text.

This is *not* to say that reading canonical texts (and their metaphorical sleights of pen) through the filter of aesthetic (literary) moments is of great metaphysical import (as Derrida sometimes implies); it is just that it is not usually done, and done so provocatively. And so doing proposes an interesting way to thematize how one can use the tradition as an etymological reservoir for a new work. To (art)historicize the philosophical genre, like historicizing culture and art themselves, raises the question of what now can and ought to be produced, what sort of critical purpose it thereby serves, and the question of how well it serves it. It is this set of questions the pragmatist critic attempts to put to the Derridean figure of the post-structuralist, (post-

---

<sup>44</sup> Derrida, "Signature Event Context" in Margins of Philosophy, 1982:307-330. I am not endorsing Derrida's "misreading" (for metaphilosophical purposes) of Austin, *or* Searle's criticisms of Derrida (for exegetical purposes) in "Reiterating the Differences: A Reply to Derrida," Glyph 1, 1978:198-208. But I *would* endorse Fish's use of Derrida's metaphilosophical points to criticize Austin and Searle, in "With the Compliments of the Author: Reflections on Austin and Derrida," Critical Inquiry 8, 1982:693-721.



modernist?) philosopher as he reuses the artifacts of old paradigms. But first . . .

## 5.5 FOUR THEMATIC EXTRAPOLATIONS:

1. One of the themes of this dissertation is the inseparable proximity of philosophy and literature -- like the inside and outside of the same reversible glove -- inescapably related in the act of writing. And *writing* is a preeminently Derridean theme which has already been written into the previous readings of the tensions between Dialectic and rhetoric, the tensions within classical pragmatism and its ambivalent attempt to establish a non-foundational genre of philosophy; and it has been written into the breakdown of structuralism as a would-be descriptive metadiscourse. Derrida's point is that writing has been debased or "abased" before speech (or vision) as the contact point to truth. Writing has been thought to be simply that which codifies what speech (or sight) makes present. And it is this initially socratic rejection of writing, of artifice, which has dominated the West. Derrida makes writing itself the (marginalized) theme of the philosophical tradition.

2. His *metaphysical critique* circulates around the "metaphysics of presence" involved in privileging speech: the longing for a moment of original plenitude when form and meaning, speech and world were simultaneously present to consciousness, a pre-lapsarian state which could be recovered by following "rigorously"

the "traces" of signification back to its "sources." But all we have left are indeed the "skid marks," the "traces" only of our strategies of signification. And tracking down traces simply leads to more traces *ad infinitum*. The recovery of presence is the metaphysical dream of Philosophical discourse. The tragi-comedy of this Philosophical effort is what generates Derrida's own metaphysics of writing, a writing about the unachievable onto-theological goals of the Philosophical genre.

3. His *literary critique* circulates around Philosophy "disfiguring its figures," around the rhetorical attempts of the tradition to master its metaphors and its failure to do so. In the attempt to produce "closure," meaning and the continuous rewriting of meaning have continued to spill out into a diffuse irresolution, a literary openness which indefinitely defers us from being able to establish closure or presence. The continuous peeling off of the shells of rhetoric and imagery, the peeling back of language, leads simply to more language with no inner core to be discovered: no Being at the end, only more deferring, difference, or "différance," as Derrida (graphically) puts the (misspelled) point. (More on, and less of, his jargon following these points.)

4. The more specific application of Derrida to aesthetics, to the philosophy-art relation, has to do with his deconstruction of "the frame" (parergon).<sup>45</sup> As the Dialectician attempted to construct a boundary or frame between truth and rhetoric, so too does

---

<sup>45</sup> Recall Peirce's failure (chapter 3.3) to keep the aesthetic on the margin, to frame the aesthetic in terms of a prior foundation.

Aesthetics depend on a distinction between the inside and the outside (of the aesthetic frame), and, therefore, on a Philosophical discourse which will firm up the distinction, be the framer, be in the frame, observe the frame -- (Such agility!). Aesthetic theory has been determined (writes Derrida) by the persistent demand that:

we must know what we are talking about, what concerns the value of beauty intrinsically and what remains external to an immanent sense of beauty. This permanent demand -- to distinguish between the internal or proper meaning and the circumstances of the object in question -- organizes every philosophical discourse on art, the meaning of art, and meaning itself, Plato to Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger. It presupposes a discourse on the boundary between the inside and the outside of the art object, in this case, a discourse on the frame. Where do we find it?<sup>46</sup>

One finds it of course in Kant's The Critique of Judgement. In other words, every analytic of aesthetic judgement rests on the possibility (and the relevance) of rigorously defining and distinguishing between what is intrinsic and what is extrinsic, what is inside (the frame) and what is outside, on what can be included and what should be excluded from judgement. And, of course, for Kant, it is a rationalist discourse (the cognitive) which frames the aesthetic (the non-cognitive). Elsewhere Derrida calls this difference "the law of genre,"<sup>47</sup> which is based on "the principle of contamination," according to which one seeks to prohibit what always occurs: the mixing of the two (say, the cognitive and the non-cognitive, the philosophical and the literary) which are being separated.

---

<sup>46</sup> Derrida, Truth in Painting, 1978:53.

<sup>47</sup> Derrida, "La Loi du genre/The Law of Genre," Glyph, 7, 1980:176-232.

Framing always produces reframing, leaving us with what Derrida calls a "certain repeated dislocation" in which the marginal can become central, form can become content, the outside can get inside. The reciprocally deconstructive link between Derrida's philosophy and his aesthetic is the point that foundational terms in Philosophy become destabilized by their own "margins," by their own attempts to suppress (frame), and make merely "external," their metaphors, their rhetoric: And so too are styles, works and interpretations of art made, thereby, unstable, or, as Dewey put it, made "provocations for new works." It is "the logic of the frame" for Derrida -- that is, the instability of the distinction between the inside and the outside -- which cannot be contained by the conceptual legislations of aesthetic discourse.

So, Philosophy frames art within a boundary with itself both constituting that boundary and being on the other side. What Derrida asserts is that: "There is framing, but the frame does not exist."<sup>48</sup>

Take away from a painting all representation, signification, theme, text as intended meaning, take away also all the material (canvas, colored paint) which for Kant cannot be beautiful in itself, rub out any drawing oriented toward a determinable end, take away its background and its social, historical, political, and economic support, and what is left? The frame, the framing, a play of forms and lines which are structurally homogeneous with the structure of the frame.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Derrida, Truth in Painting, 1978:93.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

What is left? Not art, but Philosophy. Philosophy is the discourse of framing itself as the non-work, the non-literary. The frame between philosophy and literature depends upon the paradox of making and using language to produce a metalinguistic "position," but whose authority can only be substantiated by being also within, by the "usury" of what is being described, by being both "places" at once, which are *not* places. Derrida's point is that the distinction inside/outside, (like philosophy/literature, aesthetics/art, finding/making), always evades final formulation, yet it is always at work, needing to be formulated and disrupting the possibility of being stabilized. What Derrida puts in such metaphysically interminable terms is what the pragmatist means when he says that the failure of Philosophy to justify itself as the privileged framer is the inability of any critical discourse to account for itself except as a practice. What epistemological oppositions like inside/outside cannot "leisten" (accomplish) is what no discourse needs to accomplish in the first place: it is good or bad practice, not inside and outside the practice it seeks to ground. Framing is (metaphysically) paradoxical only when it seeks to be foundational.

Derrida's deconstructive turn has brought into contact four important and interrelated points regarding the relationship between the literary (aesthetic) and the philosophical, which can be summarized with unjustifiable plainness: 1. By according a greater role to the study of figures, he has pushed with a new idiom for a change in *the concept of philosophy*. By treating the



philosophy of Kant's third Critique as a work of art (of framing), and Artaud's theatre as a contribution to the philosophy of language, Derrida keeps but does not hierarchicalize the literature/philosophy distinction. The hierarchical and privileging oppositions of framing (intrinsic/extrinsic) are thawed, and a *genre of writing* is introduced to mark the philosophical: writing, rather than foundational framing. 2. By bringing the rhetoric of philosophy out of the margins of its text, he has provided contemporary literary *and* philosophical criticism with a *shared body of themes*. These themes have to do not with being or truth, but with the tropological procedures by which they become produced. 3. He has also introduced *strategies of reading and writing*, a practice of writing about the aesthetic construction of philosophy in a way which is itself a different aesthetic, linked primarily with modernist and late-modernist movements in literature, thereby using the category of the literary reciprocally to remake and decentralize philosophy's self-image[s]. 4. This disruptive function of the literary has suggested *different goals of philosophical criticism*: non-Platonic and non-Kantian goals. Rather than the achievement of closure, of a completed system, or of a final interpretation, or even of immediately assimilable

"clarity" and easy appropriation,<sup>50</sup> what is sought is literary openness, diffusion, the celebration of the loss of both a procedure to "retrieve" the origins of discourse and the loss of a final goal or *telos* for discourse. The goal is, paradoxically, the continuous disestablishment of the referential and verifiable as possible or interesting (pleasurable) rhetorical achievements. We should read philosophy, writes Derrida, as "defined by its opus," as "a literary genre," to be read in terms of "its rhetorical organization, . . . which is not just the articulation of its signifieds and its reference to being or to truth," but, rather, as "organizing, forcing, or diverting a set of tropological possibilities." With the loss of truth, Derrida makes an aesthetic, Nietzschean recommendation: philosophy is "dancing with ideas, with words, and need I add that one must also be able to dance with the pen -- that one must learn how to write?" (Twilight of the Idols).

---

<sup>50</sup> Derrida's decentered and decentering style is also, of course, (like modernist work) ideologically motivated, not to be difficult for the sake of it, but because of the monolithic models he is attempting to criticize and escape, and because of the powerful cultural apparatuses which groom, appropriate and defuse these styles. Derrida's literary/philosophical (rhetorical) analysis of Sartre revolves precisely around how *decisive* the norms of his educational background (the lycée, the "classe préparatoire," the Ecole Normale and the "agrégation") and university were for his work, as well as the acquisition of technique and status through his link with a major publishing house. Derrida's philosophical aesthetic is also an investigation into the subtle relations between ideology, culture and the state, as regards the authority a model of discourse can acquire and how one might decentralize that authority. This is *not* intended as an endorsement of Derrida's style, but only to express some of what motivates it. Cf. "An Interview with Derrida," Derrida & Difference, Wood & Bernasconi (eds.) 1985:107-127, esp. pp. 114-120.

## 5.6 PARADIGMS LOST, AND CONTINUED ARTISTIC USAGE -- REMINDER:

Artistic practice, like post-structuralist and pragmatic rhetoric, has already found these traditional hierarchies (Truth *or* trope, intrinsic *or* extrinsic) highly fluid, reversible and responsible for each other's continued re-production. The difference here between the artful and the philosophical might be useful (professionally), but not ontologically settled or metaphysically given. In this sense the construct is no longer subordinate to the "Truth" (Dewey), the interpreted to the "directly perceived," different worlds to "*the* world" (Goodman), the metaphorical to the literal (Mary Hesse), nor literature to philosophy (Derrida & Rorty). There is no epistemological given to keep these ontologically straight, no given constraint to inhibit these old oppositions from some mutual and novel, functionally reversible interplay.

It is not only that philosophical metaphors became erased and suppressed by their products (Objectivism, Representation, Truth), but that those operations requiring the use of a medium, socio-linguistic or otherwise, have so often led to the (unnecessary) attempt to suppress the degree to which it participates in production. Dewey writes that the medium was "seen-as" a mirror rather than as an organic means of making,<sup>51</sup> and Gombrich, that the materials and schema together produced the *illusion* of their absence. Both are referring to a tradition of

---

<sup>51</sup> Dewey, "The Common Substance of the Arts," in Art as Experience, 1934:187-213.

painting which, (to offer some hackneyed examples), stopped hiding itself behind the pretence of "imitation." Abandoning the "stereoscopic reality" (Van Gogh) of representationalism, it could become a new Expressionism (Munch). It stopped "mirroring" the absent Sublime and Beautiful (Kant), and made present the anti-values of suffering and violence (Kokoschka, Beckmann).<sup>52</sup> It dropped the "constraint" of "correct perspective" (Cézanne), and became the possibility of Cubism (Picasso). With the help of Freud, an undermined sense of control and mastery of the "real" by consciousness became Surrealism (in Dali).

This meant, in other (philosophical) words, the inventive use of, rather than the rehabilitation of the priorities of the old ontological, hierarchical paradigm of Truth and Art. Without the now aged Greek hope of achieving, or wanting to achieve, ontological closure (Derrida), and without the hope that all experimental inquiry (Dewey) would converge into one final perceptual vocabulary, color and shape, for example, were no

---

<sup>52</sup> This is not an accusation that the sublime, for Kant, is simply the super-beautiful as opposed to the sense of the grotesque evinced by some modernist work. It is, rather, to say that the awe and "terror" which Kant mentions in terms of the sublime still smacks of the theologically redemptive, and is tied to his relationship not to art but to nature. Like our awe before God, we experience awe before "mountain peaks," not in terms of the worryingly human world but in terms of the more distant and non-human, to be "fear[ed] by aid of the imagination." What makes Beckmann's sentiments so different are their relation to the *human*, to the terror he feels in the face of "collectivism" (he wrote this in 1938 -- no longer in Berlin), in the face of those "longing for oblivion" in a "boundless world of turmoil." In other words, the "terror" of Kant's sublime "mountain peaks" is quite different from the terror occasioned by the sight of soldiers goose stepping down the street. It is this difference I am referring to. (Cf. Beckmann, "On My Painting" (1938), in Modern Artists On Art (ed.) R. L. Herbert, 1964. I am grateful for Peter Lewis for pointing me back to Kant's Critique to clarify my gripe with Kant on this point.)

longer subordinate to object or representational "givens" (e.g., Expressionism, Cubism). Musical phrase and form were no longer subordinate to "given" structures of melody, harmony and ensemble (structuralist metaphors Levi-Strauss is fond of), nor to romantic climax and conclusion (e.g., Schönberg's "Row," Coltran's Jazz). Stone in the hands of Moore was a medium which was not subordinated to the model or to mimetic representation. Literary language became no longer subordinate to realist theme, content, or form (Joyce, Derrida, John Barth); and in Philosophy, rhetoric became (again reminiscent of the Sophists) no longer subordinate to a mono-language of "objectivity" and "Truth" (James, Dewey). A plurality of interpretations, then, could no longer be subordinate to linguistically transparent and/or analytically inter-translatable descriptions (Quine, Rorty, Fish).

So, (the aesthetic/philosophical story might continue), should Expressionist and Cubist, or Modernist and Post-modernist, or analytic and pragmatic communities start comparing their "self-descriptions," and should a philosopher be invited to help "find" or "translate" it all into a commensurable and general ground about which everyone is talking (writing), then his will be another medium, a rhetoric, a regional short story, not a neutral mirror or meta-language, in terms of which the different sides of such a comparison are likely to come out equal or to agree to the third vocabulary (say, "Rationality") produced in the process. More specifically: Beckett has said he did not translate En attendant Godot from the French into English (Waiting for Godot) and



German (Warten auf Godot). He wrote three *different* plays. No one of them is necessarily parasitic upon or subordinate to the other. They do not form one inter-translatable identity, nor are they best compared by waiting for a single ideal Godot to arbitrate. They are different texts. They have similar but also different contexts, and connect with similar but also different socio-linguistic communities, practices, histories and interests.

The aforementioned aesthetic/philosophical oppositions and distinctions (inside/outside, literature/philosophy, fiction/fact, identity/difference) use each other in practice and seem to confuse each other unnecessarily when dualistically ontologised in theory. Rather than two separate realms to be compared, or realms which need to be linked with a theory of Truth or Being, the pragmatist suggests that we have a way to talk which can function usefully and/or not. Dewey's organicist and naturalist language about art is a way to say that these oppositions interact with, rather than ontologically and hierarchically exclude, one another. Color forms neither identity nor dualism with objects; they are neither the inside nor the outside; they, (as Dewey remarked about the Impressionist painting of his day) make each other up and down, deconstructing and reconstructing each other. Likewise with the linguistic medium, is Derrida's suggestion; no philosophical writing suddenly becomes, by mystical transport, kenotically abandoned by itself into non-writing, standing naked before the (privileged) face of Truth (no matter how much idealist

Berlin in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Hegel) and empiricist Vienna in the 20<sup>th</sup> encouraged us to sustain this dream).<sup>53</sup>

It is in being *written*, (as Derrida put it), that philosophy and aesthetic theory conjoin, that (as Dewey put it) inquiry and its purposeful constructs emerge and interrelate,<sup>54</sup> that old paradigms become artfully undermined. This is what I think Dewey got right and used a pragmatic aesthetic theory to help explicate. Dewey disliked static Absolute idealisms (in his day Bradley, Royce, etc.) and used aesthetic theory as a corrective. Rorty has rebuked parallel analytic/realist (anti-realist) lapses (in his day Kripke, Dummett, etc.) and made dapper use of Dewey and his understanding of the (non-foundational) art of philosophy (Recall p. 140.). Dewey spoke of consequential contextual/political conditions, and Rorty of "conversational" ones. But the pragmatic point is that we should make and talk critically about our philosophical styles and artifacts, not pretend to "find" them "in" the world and then enforce them as necessary, unwritten and therefore *a priori* legislative constraints.

Philosophical talk then, like talk about art and its "objects" (*passim* Wollheim),<sup>55</sup> is criticism not epistemology. It is critical

---

<sup>53</sup> One of Derrida's consistent themes has been to trace the prevalence of philosophy's appeal to the metaphors of light and vision, to the unmediated face to face relation, to an essentially theological discourse which will stop the infinite regress of signification through the image of the face.

<sup>54</sup> J. Margolis has also taken up, in a Deweyian fashion, the theme of art and the culturally emergent in the context of contemporary aesthetics and its importance for philosophy more generally in Art and Philosophy, pt. 1/3 "The Cultural Nature of Art," 1980:esp. pp.44,45,48.

<sup>55</sup> Wollheim, R., Art and Its Objects, 1968.

talk about different sorts of cultural production (artistic, linguistic, political) and interpretation of them, rather than conceptual legislation into "different realms of Being" and representation of *them*. It does not seem as if we still have an intact socio-theoretical world of ontologically simple "mere objects" (*passim* Danto)<sup>56</sup> with artistic objects and stories following *later*; as if we have an uncontroversially grounded epistemology and "fiction" following, first Philosophy and then literature (and the *rest* of culture) as a spicy after-taste to the discovery of the True and Rational. James' (like Emerson's) lyricism occasionally waxed metaphysical. They thought such rhetoric could be put to good use (The religious background of Boston is important here.); and we needn't hold this against them. But what seems agreeable in James (and Dewey and Rorty) is the belief that "Truth" and "Rationality" can be "good in the way of belief," useful constructs for getting what we want. They are compliments "paid to sentences that seem to be paying their way" (Rorty),<sup>57</sup> which "fit" with other sentences we thought good of before-hand, and which promise some new ones designed to help out.<sup>58</sup> But the philosopher is not one who has a *special* faculty or set of *a priori* principles for arbitrating. The post-structuralist and pragmatist

---

<sup>56</sup> Danto, A., The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art, 1981.

<sup>57</sup> Rorty, "Introduction," Consequences of Pragmatism, 1982:xxv.

<sup>58</sup> Dewey's more systematic questioning of "rationality" places it neither in an empiricist object nor in a Kantian (Cartesian) Subject, but in "strategic interaction." The language of "strategy" rather than "source" is echoed in post-Kantian psychology (Piaget), philosophy of science (Kuhn), and in post-structuralist philosophy and criticism (Foucault & Harari). The "source" of "rationality" being in the "structural/functional" activities of its very construction, development and use.

aesthete believe in a little insubordinationism (oppositions are not abandoned but deconstructed and reinscribed). They do not expect to find any paradigms regained; but they do expect some of their instruments to continue doing some worthwhile critical work.

### **5.7 QUIBBLES ABOUT OUR FAMILY RESEMBLANCE: AN UNEASY ALLIANCE:**

How far does the pragmatic critic go along with Derrida's philosophical aesthetic, with his post-structuralist style and rhetoric, with his criticism of "the Tradition," with his philosophical art? (These are not distinguishable in any strong sense in Derrida.) From those who know what it is to find the "right" interpretation comes the criticism of deconstruction that it allows disorder and anarchy to reign; that, on the contrary, meaning is indeed capturable by sound method; that one can still hunt down some honest-to-God truths, and by solemn professional

effort establish a "clear" prose to prove the point.<sup>59</sup> Whereas, from those who feel somewhat "left" of Derrida's paradoxical loyalty to the very subject of philosophy, of his *remaining* the persistent critic of its most foundational and classical metaphors, comes the fear that Derrida has left the institutional *producers* of this failed discourse where they were, in power, still benefiting from Derrida's linguistic diffusion; because no *social* restructuring has occurred or can occur in the context of "an undifferentiated textuality," in the context of a relentless "post-structure" which

---

<sup>59</sup> Regarding the loss of an analytic foundation by which a language would prove how good a job it is doing, there have been some attempts to propose a family resemblance between the "deconstructions" of Quine and Goodman and those of Derrida. (e.g., C. Norris, 1983 and S. C. Wheeler's very helpful article, "The Extension of Deconstruction," 1986:3-21.) This is worthwhile but also misleading for the following reasons: 1. Both Quine and Goodman make their initial moves toward language-centered conventionalism in the context of empiricism and its failure to find *objects* and *properties* behind or as the supports of language. Derrida's context is less circumscribed. His use and understanding of language engages in a larger cultural domain which links questions of language more to literature than to the fallout of empiricist physics. This is significant because: 2. Quine might indeed *soften* the authority of empiricism, but he nevertheless maintains a controlled discourse committed to the role of evidence, committed to keeping science the primary co-partner regarding questions of language. Whereas Derrida, in the context of high modernism (in the context of aesthetics), writes in terms of a "crisis of culture" *at large*, effecting "language as a whole." Hence, his style and his "arguments" resist being regroomed and paraphrased into the would-be neutral and socially congenial discourse of late-analytic philosophy of language. Neither Quine and Goodman nor Derrida conceive of language as a transparent window; but in Derrida, language takes on a more autotelic and uncontrollable agency and power. It is this *stylistic* difference which itself articulates a different relationship to (philosophy of) language, which cuts across any distinction between the form Derrida's writing takes as *opposed* to the *content* he "shares" with Quine and Goodman. It is this *stylistic* difference which should not be trivialized in the production of their "shared resemblance." 3. Derrida's impact on *literary*-philosophical questions, on questions of the aesthetics of philosophical writing itself, has produced a more celebratory (and less shop worn) expansion of the philosophical genre, in mutually beneficial contact with literary criticism. This is to say that the richer and more illuminating venue for making comparisons between, say, Derrida and Quine might be less in terms of a "commensurable" philosophy of language than in terms of the (aesthetic) *values* with which they stylize philosophical writing.



abjures latching on to *anything* solid.<sup>60</sup> The pragmatist is roaming somewhere in the excluded middle, uneasy about Derrida's relation to "the Tradition" and about the (Heideggerian) art which Derrida contrives to rework it, but an admirer of the plurality of languages his art employs. In the following a pragmatic set of realignments will be presented:<sup>61</sup>

1. Derrida has been so diligently clever at undermining the metaphors of old foundations that he has lost contact with the social context, contexts which mediate the relations *between* metaphors and people or social experience, contexts in which already dead and/or still successful rhetorics acquire their force, where they receive or lose their concrete endorsements: Reenter the pragmatic rhetorician.

2. In concentrating on the diffusion of meaning to prevent the re-consolidation of the grand metaphors of "the Tradition," and in order to keep opening the "the Tradition's" "blind spot" to "its own

---

<sup>60</sup> Although, deconstruction has indeed had some impact on the Marxist literary theories of, for example, Fredric Jameson and Terry Eagleton. What were considered by many Marxists to be revelatory tools which pried apart a text for its hidden social core, these tools have been opened up, become "hermeneutic." As even Eagleton writes, Marxism is not a tool for *decoding* novels by reference to an explicit social content or theme, it is an attempt "to understand the complex, indirect relations between [literary] works and the ideological worlds they inhabit -- relations which emerge not just in 'themes' and 'preoccupations' but in style, rhythm, image, quality, and *form*." Marxism and Literary Criticism, 1976:6. Although Eagleton often tends to treat works as allegories of Marxist ideology, he does not usually treat this shift from the idiom of the text in question to the idiom of Marxism as an instance of the latter having *represented* the former.

<sup>61</sup> Much of the discussion which follows follows Rorty's "Philosophy as a Kind of Writing: An Essay on Derrida," 1982:90-109; and his "Deconstruction and Circumvention," 1984:1-23. The latter article is, I think, a closer and more careful reading of Derrida than the former.

metaphorics," Derrida has paradoxically rehabilitated the (necessary) status of the grand texts of the classical canon and mythunderstood "the Tradition" as a still unitary discourse which requires a "brutal interruption." This (thinks the pragmatist) is already redundant.

3. In sustaining this (Heideggerian) myth that an "ontotheological" discourse permeates the entire history and future possibility of the West in every domain of expression (science, politics, literature and philosophy), he has self-deceptively overblown the cultural relevance of an academic specialty and the idea that the philosophical deconstruction of this "language-condition" (Heidegger) could make a significant *difference* to our culture's practice. He has put the "urgency" of a deconstructionist theory ahead of the variety of practices which have already made the theory superfluous. (It will be argued in chapter 6 that this is late- rather than post-modernism.)

4. In attempting such an indeed formidable re-reading of "the Tradition" through literary figures, Derrida establishes thereby an *artificial* (unjustifiably omnipresent) dilemma which neglects seeing the degree to which it has already been replaced by a smaller plurality of pragmatic questions and discourses which latch onto those bits of our traditions which can be useful for current purposes. This is what the pragmatist (like Dewey) does when he borrows (non-foundational bits) from sophism, empiricism, impressionism, Marxism, or wherever; and it is what

much post-modern art does (without metaphysical inhibition) as well. In effect, one borrows for reasons of use and effect, not because the same old metaphors have succeeded in hiding their metaphoricity, made us ontotheological dupes once again, but because they are indeed flexible metaphors which can still do some good work. (More on the analogy between pragmatic philosophy and the post-modern artworld in the following chapter.)

Derrida is one of a group of writers who have said that the philosopher is a kind of writer who doesn't like to acknowledge that this is what he does, who privileges a certain metaphor (banking on "the light of reason," "the vision of truth"), who transfers it to the world, and says that he found it in the "nature of things" rather than wrote it in a book. The upshot of Derrida's point is that philosophy becomes writing about what others have written, with no way to test the text's accuracy of representation except over and against another text. Thereby, when Dewey writes about some classical text book problems (mind/body, freedom/determinism) that "we don't solve them, we get over them," and when Kuhn writes that when enough "anomalies are not explained" a new idiom can be constructed to have a go, they are both talking about the possibility of two or more *different* texts which can be compared on pragmatic grounds (not necessarily commensurable and certainly not foundational grounds) to see (or fight to see) which text will do the desired work most successfully. But when Derrida writes that "the dream

at the heart of philosophy is . . .," or "it is only on the basis of *différance* that . . .," or "all texts deconstruct themselves," he seems to be saying that there is only *one* textual strategy, one ubiquitous metaphysic of discourse, always structured and unstructuring itself in the *same way*. The point is that when these sorts of pronouncements appear, Derrida loses the critical power of his own deconstructions, the power of his own idiom to remain different, to remain an outlaw to this "law of genre," to remain outside of the dream he criticises.

In other words, in philosophy (as in architecture, painting and Kuhnian science), the new idiom need *not* explain, "in the most faithful, *interior* way, the structured genealogy of philosophy's concepts;"<sup>62</sup> nor need it explain the *nature* of coming up with *any* idiom which acquires power. It need only *do* things, have a successful jargon or style which compares well, is more agreeable than the way last year's (last decade's, last period's, last millenium's) idiom performed. That is, Derrida, in *producing* the myth of a unitary dream or genre of philosophy, and in presuming that it is central to Western culture, is working against his own success as a critic. Derrida is indeed ambivalent about remaining within his own trap. Where Hegel and Heidegger offered a program for building a new cultural pyramid with philosophy on the top, Derrida has most certainly dropped the nostalgic hope of completing it, but he has held onto the necessity of the lineage of texts which promoted it. He sees their truths as our metaphors,

---

<sup>62</sup> Derrida, *Positions*, 1981:6.

but the tricks those metaphors played (to ground themselves) as tricks we cannot avoid. He has, in Dewey's terms, confused an institution of texts for a momentous metaphysical dilemma, one we can "get over."<sup>63</sup>

The paradox here is that to say we cannot but "rigorously repeat [this] circle" implies a point of observation, a "certain exterior that

---

<sup>63</sup> In D. F. Krell's Intimations of Mortality: Time, Truth, and Finitude in Heidegger's Thinking of Being, 1986, we can't possibly get over anything, and certainly not Heidegger: For (he writes) "[e]ven the young Heidegger *knows*, as Richard Rorty and John Dewey do not seem to know (perhaps it would be Un-American to know it), that *all* courageous and forthright decisions to abandon metaphysics result in naive reduplications of *its* patterns of thought. The passion to be original, to start from scratch, to roll up our sleeves and attack our "present troubles," dissipates itself in second-hand and third-rate replays." (p. 144: My italics.) (Obviously Heidegger and Krell "know" something the pragmatists have never felt privy to, something "deeply" metaphysical and inescapable that pragmatists fail to worry about. For they certainly don't *know*, or understand how one could *know*, that abandoning a certain sort of text (metaphysics) means we are *bound* to "reduplicate its patterns." They seem, rather, to ask: What are *its* (irrevocable?) patterns but the production of another ahistorical essentialism, the elevation of *someone's* meta-discourse? Of course we don't "start from scratch," nor am I aware of Dewey and Rorty having suggested we could. On the contrary, we are "funded" with an enormous amount which we "replay." But why one *must* "replay" Heidegger is still not clear. One might, rather, suppose that there *is* some possibility of change: in history, in philosophical interest and idiom, perhaps even a difference between what sorts of things philosophers were allowing to be "replayed" in Germany in the 1930's in comparison with North America in the 1930's -- however *un*-metaphysical this (social) form of "knowing" might be. Apparently one can't start pragmatically with an interest in "present troubles" because these "do not touch the mystery." (p. 148) And, anyway, (Krell writes) "[i]t is surely pathetic to believe or hope that at the end of metaphysics some sort of "other thinking" will effect any real change in the world." (p. 150) Well! It appears that the only mystery here is how pompously Krell reduplicates the mystifications of Heidegger. Dewey's retort (p. 75, n. 2): "Better it is for philosophy to err in active participation in the living struggles and issues of its own age and times than to maintain an immune monastic impeccability, without relevancy and bearing in the generating ideas of its contemporary present."



is unqualifiable or unnameable."<sup>64</sup> It implies a position common also to the unworkable paradoxes of Royce and Peirce. (Cf. chapter 3.) As Royce's Absolute monism attempted to explain error and plurality, he put the Absolute into the position of having to explain their *unreality*, putting himself, thereby, into the position of having to explain the ultimate impossibility of what he did see by comparison to the Absolute, by that which, by its nature couldn't be seen or grasped. He had to get the unreal, the "appearance" of the plural (descriptively) right by comparison to what was out of reach. But how does one compare (accurately represent) the plural to the One or Absolute when the whole point is that there *is* only one thing? So too with Peirce. How could he explain the contrast between the *eventual* truth of science ("in the long run") to the apparent error of what we know now, when the only possible (mortal) position is in terms of what we know now? (This is again their inheritance from Kant -- attempting to contrast the conceivable [the phenomenal] to the inconceivable [the noumenal]: This is indeed quite a trick.) But Derrida is caught in the same metaphysical and eventually unproductive paradox, but doubly so because he articulates it self-consciously, embellishes it and makes it unavoidable.

Derrida writes that "metaphor can never be dominated;" that "no philosophy, as such, has ever renounced this Aristotelian ideal:"

---

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* This momentous and paradoxically framed fight is "to think -- in the most faithful, interior way -- the structured genealogy of philosophy's concepts, but at the same time to determine -- from a certain exterior that is unqualifiable or unnameable by philosophy -- what this history has been able to dissimulate or forbid."

because "[t]his ideal is philosophy."<sup>65</sup> In so writing, he is in the same aforementioned paradoxical position (of Royce and Peirce), that of implying a position from which he could contrast the only text there is to something which is different, to a text which might be unworried about such mastery, *not* searching for a univocal language or repressing its own rhetoricity, not proposing the victory of "distinct meaning" as the only *telos* of philosophical inquiry. So, when Derrida uses his own new idiom to "disrupt" the possibility of his prose being reappropriated into this ideal dream, he turns his own pragmatic accomplishment against itself, and uses his own ambidexterity, his own ability to play more than one game, as a way of saying something like, "*really* there is only one game and I embody the paradox of resistance."

By thus reestablishing the metaphysics he wants out of, Derrida must become aware of the paradox of his own performance; and he *exploits* it by writing the "dilemma" as a tragi-comedy, (writing without Heidegger's gloom or Foucault's bitterness), by writing indeed in a spirit of radical toleration (as his own textual range and stylistic games imply): But it is nevertheless written in the *Hegelian* spirit of a necessary, irrevocable complicity with this Tradition.<sup>66</sup> By problematizing this as a universal and general "dilemma of all discourse" to such a degree, it is impossible to assess whether everyone suffers the illness in the *same* way, to the *same* degree. For the *context* of discourses never changes (for

---

<sup>65</sup> Derrida, "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," 1982:247.

<sup>66</sup> This is what "Aufhebung," or in Derrida's terms "relève," entails: the necessary *retention* of what one wishes, by negation, to overcome.

the context is discourse itself). Hence, the relation of a vocabulary to context is never asked (except obliquely).<sup>67</sup> Metaphysics in its most inapplicable "sense" is restored in the degree to which Derrida's reading of (the myth) of "the Tradition" is persuasive. Derrida is uneasy with his own novelty. And in this regard too the pragmatist finds Derrida's critique of "the dream" helpful, but its continuous and paradoxical restoration (*relève*) unhistorical.

The paradox is being stressed here because Derrida's great theme is the *lack* of closure, while the dream of philosophy is precisely to find one true metaphor, to find closure, in the form of statements like "No statement can be true unless . . .," or "No statement can make sense unless . . ." (Recall A. J. Ayer.) And these statements themselves must be part of a vocabulary which is closed; and, at the same time, they must be able to know which vocabularies don't belong in order to be able to exclude them. That is, one must know, in order for the proposition to be operative, all other vocabularies, and know that they are translatable into one's own universalized vocabulary; and it must, on top of this feat, be able to refer to itself without paradox -- know that its statement "not true unless" belongs to the closed category of true sentences. Derrida knows the paradoxicality of this self-reference full well, and makes it all the more extravagant with statements like "all Western discourse is dominated by . . .," when he could have avoided the circuitous brilliance required of his own pushing

---

<sup>67</sup> For example, Derrida does make a much needed contextual reference in his essay "The Ends of Man," 1982:130; but he relinquishes its effect and use by returning to the question of "metaphoricity in general," p. 130.

endlessly against and yet reiterating such paradox by simply not formulating a totalizing claim in the first place. And it is this escape from unnecessary paradox, of trying to do too much, which I think James and Dewey, like Wittgenstein and Rorty later, stopped indulging in.

As Rorty writes: "just when we pragmatic Wittgensteinian therapists were congratulating ourselves on having disabused the learned world of the idea that [this paradox is] 'deep,' just when we thought we had got this terminology nicely leveled off and trivialized," along came Derrida to say, not indeed that it is a *worrying* paradox, but precisely because it cannot be avoided, we must retain it, even if playfully. He wants to deconstruct all the classical discourses which thought they had found closure; but he won't "de-thematize" these efforts as just a set of systems and tropes we don't use, and don't need to use any longer; that, like the Gothic cathedral, this form of philosophy "is a genre which had a distinguished career and an important historical function but which now survives largely in the form of self-parody."<sup>68</sup> Or positively stated: Like the efforts of Schönberg and/or Stravinsky, a medium can again be made meaningful and useful when it drops old "structures," when a dissonance is created to revivify a medium which has lost its critical/effective power and cannot be reinvigorated by endless repetition. A medium must assess itself (encourages the pragmatist) in the context of cultural

---

<sup>68</sup> Rorty, "Deconstruction and Circumvention," 1984:19.

change (as modernist and post-modernist aesthetics have attempted to do).

It is the enormous figure of Heidegger who has kept Derrida under the shadow of the philosophical family tree from Plato to Husserl and Heidegger himself.<sup>69</sup> It is Derrida's assessment of Heidegger which encourages him to talk in terms of "the dominance of an entire metaphysics of proximity of Being with the values of neighboring, shelter, house, service, guard, voice, and listening. . .; on the basis of both this metaphysics and the thinking of the ontico-ontological difference, one could even make explicit *an entire theory of metaphoricity in general*."<sup>70</sup> (My emphasis.) So, Derrida wishes "to change terrain, in a discontinuous and irruptive fashion, by brutally placing oneself outside, and by affirming an absolute break and difference." To do this "one must speak several languages and produce several texts at once." What we need in order to do this is what Nietzsche called a change of "style;" "and if there is style, Nietzsche reminded us, it must be *plural*." (*Ibid.* p. 135.)<sup>71</sup> But just when Derrida gives the

<sup>69</sup> Rorty indeed treats the philosopher's relationship to the tradition as a familial rather than a metaphysical one, treating the tradition as a sort of *Bildungsroman*. -- "a family romance involving, e.g., Father Parmenides, honest old Uncle Kant, and bad brother Derrida" -- the latest offspring still being obsessed by an ancient family tree, reluctant to tell a different story, through a different and culturally contextualized narrative, relevant to our specific period and location within the history of the West. Cf. Rorty, "Philosophy as a Kind of Writing: An Essay on Derrida," 1982:92. In other words, for non-Hegelian, non-Heideggerian pragmatists there is no persistently ubiquitous but hidden tree (metaphor) holding us all back, no single persistent problem or tradition save perhaps the persistence of such neo-Hegelians and neo-Heideggerians.

<sup>70</sup> Derrida, "The Ends of Man", 1982:130.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. also Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, 1978, for further remarks on the aesthetics of philosophizing, of using different styles vis-à-vis Nietzsche.



impression of writing his way out, indeed with a vocabulary of writing, with puns, spinning out associations as well as inferences, he then returns to the chiasmus;<sup>72</sup> in which one still hears the reminder that we are dealing with the "*whole of the West*." Hence, the attempt to "change terrain," to get "outside" is impossible.

My point is: 1. Derrida has set up an artificial and uncontextualized myth (the Tradition), an undeterminable etymological "force" (Heidegger again), against which he then does "battle" (with metaphors like "violence" and "brutally placing oneself outside"). Derrida is a responder to *Texts* which are raised up like windmills for mythological fights. This Heideggerian background suits etymological specialists; and Derrida is a good one. It suits a professionalized *Sitz im Lesen* still consolodating a Tradition which, if not since the pre-socratic Skeptics, Cynics and Sophists then certainly since the Baconian enlightenment, has generated a more questioning, rhetorically pliant, historically adaptive and differentiated set of discourses than Derrida's notion of "*a dominating metaphors*" can do justice to. He has set up an ideal type as if no new language games within the literature of philosophy or science or politics had ever taken place. Derrida certainly does not have Heidegger's nostalgia (regarding Greece)

---

<sup>72</sup> The primary rhetorical gesture of deconstruction is the *chiasmus* ("One opens what is closed and closes what is left open." Or another example: "One gets inside the Tradition by getting to its outside; by striving to get outside one remains inside.") It is a technique of reversal which nevertheless repeats. It is a displacement of the old order or hierarchy by way of this reversal which functions, I think, to *stabilize* the "necessity" of being caught in between. Like Derrida's other forms of paradox, it can function as a conservative gesture.

or political myopia (regarding Germany), but he is nevertheless a curiously contented Sisyphus still rolling the fictional rock of the Tradition up several different hills, albeit chuckling.

2. Closer again to aesthetics: Heidegger sought a new idiom, a different frame for philosophizing, and a more primal vocabulary (a poetics) of "Sein" and "Ereignis" to support his story. And Derrida too begins on occasion to look suspiciously like a transcendental story teller when making his narrative appeal to "differance" and "trace." The point is that "textuality" sometimes begins to look like reiterating the old hope for *one* matrix of metaphors; as if "writing" will succeed (and write itself) where "Being" could not (speak itself); as if one grand *form* of literature is the only way worlds get made; and as if literature is therefore *the* paradigmatic and only art. This again uses an aesthetic (or writing) to reestablish the role of philosophy: Language is *the* art, and the philosopher is the benefactor (and in Derrida's case, admittedly the beneficiary) of its dominance. The point here is not simply to say that paintings and films educate vision, that buildings help define our sense of space, and that our worlds are, as Goodman puts it, plural and not all products of *one* notational system -- language; it is also to make the metaphilosophical point that as Hegel and Heidegger privileged poetry as the first art, after, of course, philosophy, (the *Denker* over, or as "Aufheber" of *Dichtung*), the metaphors of "textuality" often performs the same function. Everything is a product of the written, of metaphor, and

the philosopher is the *relève*, the relifter, the *Aufheber* of writing in general.<sup>73</sup>

3. Closer again to the rhetorical: Talk primarily about the literary arts is for Derrida essentially strategic; because they can be played off against philosophy to produce an "interminable text," a writing without *archai*, without *telos*, etc.. And the Derrida-da of Glas performs this juxtaposition of different sorts of writing at length. But a *social* context, which the rhetoricians attempted to keep the Dialecticians mindful of, is kept on the margins. As much as Derrida blurs the frames which keep distinctions from finding foundational/hierarchical supports (e.g., philosophy/literature, truth/art), he nevertheless operates within a *metaphysical* frame, idealizing and totalizing a problem of language which fails to admit into the conversation the historical processes which have already displaced the grand philosopher and his meta-exercise from center stage in the west. This is indeed Foucault's reproach against Derrida -- perhaps the last great epi-phenomenal practitioner of this form of metaphysics.

Today Derrida is the most decisive representative of the [Classical] system in its final brilliance; the reduction of discursive practice to textual traces; the elision of the events that are produced there in order to retain nothing but marks for a reading; the invention of voices behind texts in order

---

<sup>73</sup> *Relève* is ambiguous and persistently untranslatable, a pun, a word play, a paradox, an endless revision of Hegel. It is "based" on Hegel's *aufheben*/*Aufhebung* (verb/noun) in that it is a metaphysical-conceptual dynamic which involves the dialectical movement of negation *and* conservation, change *and* repetition. It raises (*relève*) our understanding of the "basis" upon which understanding is possible to a higher level of understanding. For a discussion of the ways in which Derrida uses these notions, cf. "Differance," 1982:19,29 n.23 and "*Ousia* and *Gramme*: Note on a Note from *Being and Time*," 1982:43 n.15.

not to have to analyze the modes of implication of the subject in discourse; assigning the spoken and the unspoken in the text to an originary place in order not to have to reinstate the discursive practices in the field of transformations where they are effected.

I do not say that it is a metaphysics, . . . I shall go much further: I shall say that it is a trifling, historically well-determined pedagogy which very visibly reveals itself.<sup>74</sup>

Foucault's remarks are very pointed even if ungenerous.

Derrida constructs a totalizing "dream of philosophy," into which he himself continues to wander, a dream which the pragmatist had thought already sufficiently satirized at the turn of the century if not sufficiently by the rhetoricians at the time of its Socratic inception. What Dewey wanted to resist was the coercion of a totalizing vocabulary. He did not have, and did not have the *desire* for,<sup>75</sup> *one* meta-language. He simply did not want our pragmatically different languages to avoid each other as metaphysicalist/absolutist talk in the epistemology of his day avoided his pragmatic, aesthetic and experimental talk of art and science).<sup>76</sup> It is not that deconstructionist conceptual foes like "the Origin," "the Source," "the noun" *themselves* need be more upsetting than other symbols and metaphors, paintings and

<sup>74</sup> Foucault, Histoire de la folie, 1972:602.

<sup>75</sup> "Desire" is another key term in the post-structuralist (e.g., Freud via Derrida, Kristeva) diagnosis of what "the West" has wished language could do; i.e., the desire that it give us the Truth, but only by *suppressing* itself as a system of signs, metaphors. Cf. J. Kristeva, Desire in Language, 1980; a largely psychoanalytic (Lacan) account of the desire/power dimension in socio-linguistic operations to achieve mastery, sub-plotted with a feminist critique of this "desire;" and Derrida, "White Mythology; Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," 1982.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Dewey, "Social Inquiry," Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, 1938, in which Dewey highlights the cultural matrix as forming a continuum between both aesthetic and natural scientific inquiry.

symphonies, believed on occasion to have special powers in specific circumstances. It is that such predominantly Heideggerian textual word-worries about our "*language-condition*" themselves need something other than textual opposition. This con-text needs something else with which to (functionally) interact. In other words, rather than placing philosophical/rhetorical criticism in *self*-deconstructing texts, Dewey linked the text with its social location: That is, Aristotle is not a culprit simply because he sponsored the "dream of philosophy" and suppressed rhetoric under the fist of the Dialectician (Zeno's image); Aristotelian ontology is suspect also in the context of its complicity with Athenian slavery;<sup>77</sup> as is Kant's principled contrast between the noumenal and the phenomenal suspect in the context of the politically convenient Lutheran/Prussian separation of the "internal," moral (noumenal) and the "external," political (phenomenal) subjects. With the arrival of Hegel's absolute *Geist* Dewey linked the attempt to produce its German embodiment; and perhaps with Heidegger's pre-occupation with Greek etymology he might have linked the

---

<sup>77</sup> In "Philosophy's Search for the Immutable," The Quest for Certainty Dewey uses a contextual/sociological discourse to place Aristotle's ontology, and to argue that it needn't find a place in our context.



politicized removal of Husserl's being-there in Freiburg (Grass).<sup>78</sup> Dewey too had a familial tie to Hegel,<sup>79</sup> but his re-reading involved a cultural context, his own and Hegel's; and *this* wasn't "aufgehoben" into another philosophical dialect or by another meta-language of big "binary oppositions," or as part of an omnipresent "history of metaphysics" (which then required urgent deconstruction in order to get culture out of its "crisis").

Linguistically speaking, Derrida has certainly left the structuralist penitentiary and chosen what the post-modern writer William Gass calls a "*kindly* imprisonment" within a certain form of philosophy. And the pragmatist is certainly a supporter of Derrida's (somewhat narcissistic, e.g., in La carte postale, 1980)

---

<sup>78</sup> For a terribly dark literary/political parody of the Heideggerian idiolect cf. G. Grass's Hundejahre (Dog Years), 1963, trans. Manheim 1981; Cf. Harry Liebenau: "A visionary, who lied a good deal, . . . believed this and that, and regarded the never-ending war as an extension of his schooling. . . , a uniformed high school student, who venerated the Fuhrer,...and of late the philosopher Martin Heidegger. With the help of these models he succeeded in burying a real mound made of human bones under medieval allegories. The pile of bones, which in reality cried out to high heaven between Tyrol and Kaiserhafen, was mentioned in his diary as a place of sacrifice, erected in order that purity might come-to-be in the luminous, which transluminates purity and so fosters light." Both Harry and Stortebeker took part in the Kaiserhafen battery's "increasing success in purging the battery area of rats . . . You couldn't help admiring Stortebeker, . . . Between rat death and rat death he whispered in his own tongue, which however had been infected with obscurity by the tech-sergeant's language, rat propositions and ontological rat truths, which, so we all believed, lured the prey within reach of his glove and made possible his overarching withdrawal. Imperturbably, while he harvested below and piled up above, his discourse ran its course: 'The rat withdraws itself by unconcealing itself into the ratty. So the rat errates the ratty, illuminating it with errancy. For the ratty has come-to-be in the errancy where the rat errs and so fosters error. That is the essential area of all history...(He) spoke almost tenderly and with a mild didacticism: . . . This tail-knotted . . . demonstration . . . he termed his being-there-relatedness.'" (pp.324, 25, 38, 39, 30, 31).

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism", Contemporary American Philosophers, Eds. Adams & Montague, 1930; where he stresses his relationship to Hegel.

way of reinvigorating what James called the "plasticity" of language. Philosophy can indeed "loop" and stretch between pre-socratic rhetoric and post-modern fiction. But the pragmatist adds to this that, like post-modern art, he can do his picking and choosing for specific social/aesthetic purposes, without nostalgia, without bearing the weight of the "*Whole* of the Tradition," by referring to traditions for reasons of *use*, out of perhaps *ironic* loyalties to systems and styles which as wholes are not inhabitable or historically reestablishable. One can tell the style of a philosopher, like the style of a painter, (as Goodman puts it), by their signatures, that is, by the names they drop and the styles they quote, not by the universal truths discovered.<sup>80</sup> Philosophy in this regard is also in the same cultural position as art, where re-creating and using canons has taken over the role which philosophical systems (like those of Aquinas or Kant) were at one time able to play.<sup>81</sup> It is to this pluralism of the post-modern and to its pragmatic criticisms and contributions to aesthetic (non-foundational) culture which I now turn.

---

<sup>80</sup> Goodman, in "The Status of Style," 1975:799-811, argues for the importance of the notion of 'style' precisely because it is a signature which cuts across any *epistemological* frame between form and content, between "internal" and "external" properties. Style, in helping to locate a work (give it its signature), is also part of its very ability to function symbolically. The same would hold for a philosophical work. It only functions as a work in so far as it has a style rather than presuming to function on the "basis" of having an unstylized "truth."

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Rorty's "The Historiography of Philosophy: Four Genres" in *Philosophy in History*, (eds.) Rorty, Schneewind, Skinner, 1984 for the (I think persuasive) argument that *Geistesgeschichte*, because of its function in creating canons, has usurped, in contemporary culture, the role that grand systems played in previous periods.

## 6.1 A POST-MODERN RHETORIC:

Modernism appears as a polemical, sloppy and mean-too-much rubric which makes the appeal to the post-modern appear to do little more than compound the conceptual problems of its parent. And yet, it is perhaps useful in helping to elicit positive points of conversational contact between pragmatism and the arts, in drawing out further the relation between philosophy and the aesthetic. For, like the analytic and structuralism, "modernism" seems to acquire its coherence and order as much from the "post" group (post-analytic, post-structuralist, post-modern) which wishes to define it and go elsewhere as from any "basis" the modernists may have provided for themselves. Indeed, it is precisely the *incredulity* regarding the establishment of a "basis" or foundation for art and "theory" which is one of the persistent themes of post-modern discourse, and precisely where the pragmatist locates an important reciprocal interest between contemporary art and philosophy. Being post-modern does not always mean the same thing in literature, in architecture and in philosophy; so to pretend that it can stand for a determinable "movement" in culture, art or thought is highly suspect. Yet, it is this elusiveness which makes it different and interesting: it is *not* unified; it has not stopped long enough to make a

"Begriffsgeschichte" very helpful (*passim* Huyssen);<sup>1</sup> it has no orthodox and centralized progenitor, no apocalyptic "masternarrative" of history to support itself and no board of trustees in the academy to enforce its (highly plural) standards.<sup>2</sup> It is this aesthetic/intellectual decentralization which I will attempt to make the "basis" of its pragmatic and positive value, its using and mixing of historical forms as genres, as a way to advertize in advance that there is no underlying truth to get at.

Both John Barth (p. 34) and Umberto Eco (p. 57) have been alluded to as rhetorical writers who see post-modern literature as the use of traditional forms (genres) of writing in ironic and displaced ways, who appeal neither to polemical repudiation nor to imitation of realist or modernist precedents. Nor are they attempting merely to parody over-privileged and over-used forms. They may not be interested in reforming the major achievements of modernism, but their post-modern pluralism is still committed to the values of craftsmanship and audience, to (pragmatic) literary practice without absolutes to be transcended

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Andreas Huyssen's, "Mapping the Postmodern," New German Critique, Fall, 1984:5-52 for an attempt to locate the stirrings of the post-modern in several separate, creative and ununified attacks on Modernist elitism, academicism and quite puritanical repression in such a way as to not quite constitute the sort of systematic *conceptual* tradition which philosophical aestheticians tend to search out.

<sup>2</sup> One of the theoretical dispositions around which modernists tend to rally is an apocalyptic and crisis-centered view of history and aesthetic culture, the concomitant view that they have identified the "bourgeois causes" of this "crisis," and that they can overcome it (with the help of the rhetoric of Nietzsche) by instituting an heroic break with the culture's historical/aesthetic past. For a good historical summary of how this crisis-view links modernist aesthetics cf. M. Bradbury's and J. McFarlane's "The Name and Nature of Modernism" in Modernism, (eds.) Bradbury and McFarlane, 1976:19-56.

(in the name of change) or achieved (in the name of a new and radical truth). In the context of (and by analogy to) this generic pluralism I will (in section 6.5) compare the analytic (modernist) and reformist rhetoric of Danto (still after the truth despite (notwithstanding) his aesthetics of "transfiguration") to the post-modern pragmatism of Rorty (in section 6.7), in order to extrapolate a concluding view as to the way[s] in which one might generalize (with the help of post-modern aesthetics) about the genre of philosophy.

Both Lyotard and Habermas are *philosophers* explicitly engaged in articulating the stakes of the debate between post-modernists and modernists, but still doing so in terms of a "crisis" of *epistemology*. Lyotard argues that our (intellectual) culture is now "incredulous towards meta-narratives," and that what has constituted the modern has been "an explicit appeal to some grand narrative, such as the dialectics of the Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth:" i.e., the sustained attempt to "legitimate itself with reference to a metadiscourse." The alternative (he implies) is to produce a continuous series of revolutions which cannot be reabsorbed into another "grand narrative." Habermas, on the other hand, wants "to preserve at least one standard" by which some continued critique and emancipatory reform of our social discourses can proceed and develop, so that the distinction between "theory" and ideology doesn't lose force. The pragmatist



attempts to split the difference.<sup>3</sup> The pragmatist can also be incredulous, but he is still interested in critique and reform precisely because he thinks that it never was on the basis of an epistemological meta-narrative (or "standard," *passim* Habermas) provided by philosophers that critique has ever succeeded; nor is permanent revolution (a modernist, avant-garde hangover of Lyotard's) required, and, therefore, an emancipatory (or any other) narrative obsolete or not "normalizable" (in a provisional and Kuhnian sense), simply because French post-structuralists have suddenly discovered the loss of the meta-narrative which was thought to be required for good critical or normal discourse felicitously to proceed. To quote Fish quoting Isocrates, "good discourse is discourse that works."<sup>4</sup>

In other words, the felicitous alliance between pragmatism (Fish and Rorty), rhetoric (Isocrates) and post-modern aesthetics (Eco, for the moment) will suggest that it is on the relativistic "basis" of pragmatic, generic and stylistic relationships (not epistemology) that we decide which and how philosophical texts work. To better establish the analogy between the pluralism of post-modern aesthetics and the genres of philosophy, I will offer a reading of the work of Rorty (over and against Danto) and of the music of Aaron Copland (over and against Adorno and Schönberg, in section 6.4) as pragmatic representatives of an aesthetic/ethic of production which is neither repetitively bound to nor polemically

---

<sup>3</sup> as Rorty does in "Habermas and Lyotard on Postmodernity," in Habermas and Modernity, (ed.) Richard Bernstein, 1984:161-175.

<sup>4</sup> Fish, "Withholding the Missing Portion: Power, Meaning and Persuasion in Freud's 'The Wolf-man'," (abbreviated version) TLS, Aug. 29, 1986.

trying to out-transcend its generic precedents. They represent a socially engaged aesthetic which is interested in the pluralistic versatility of writing (composing) for a hybrid (not entirely consolidated and professionalized) culture which does not understand itself as unified and all-powerful (the legitimizing myth of avant-garde adversarial aesthetics), nor as needing to overthrow and replace all preceding generic frames and styles with an aesthetic/philosophical oligarchy of mandarin modernists (the legitimizing strategy of Adorno and Schönberg).

## 6.2 POST-MODERN THEMES:

The post-modern is initially and perhaps appropriately a negative banner in a period, unlike that shared by 19<sup>th</sup>-century transcendentalists and empiricists (Recall p. 8.), in which various philosophical/aesthetic practitioners have *not* been entirely sure where they stood, perhaps sure that they were standing, and comfortably able to stand, in more than one place, and able either to resent or joyfully ignore the utopian and mechanized heroics of Bauhaus "straightforwardness," analytic "simplicity" and/or serialist rebellion. In effect, they have been acquiring a pluralistic and relativized relationship to past tradition which Le Corbusier and Gropius, for example, had ruthlessly attempted to deny. What occurred was a Jamesian change in aesthetic sentiment. And this is what Gerald Graff's "The Myth of the Postmodern Breakthrough" fails to notice.<sup>5</sup> Graff collapses 1960's post-modernism either into a strain of apocalyptic desperation or visionary celebration -- both of which are already a part of Modernism. But it is the pragmatic middle, the casual and ironic which he misses out, a middle not bitching against an *evil* orthodoxy but toying with an optional reservoir of useful technique and exhausted ideology which can be combined in any number of new and locally relevant ways.

In other words, the post-modern is "highly eclectic," which, for neo-marxists like Huyssen seems to be a code word for "uncritical hodgepodge," and which, for critics like Clement Greenberg (*the*

---

<sup>5</sup> G. Graff, "The Myth of the Postmodern Breakthrough," in Literature Against Itself, 1979:31-62.

theoretical high priest of American Modernism), entails a "lowering of aesthetic standards" due to the very democratization of art-historical periods. That is, what unsympathetic modernists are lamenting is the loss of authority (their's), the loss of a clear hierarchy of aesthetic (ideological) judgement. Whereas, the *positive* achievement of this eclecticism is what Charles Jencks has called post-modernism's "double coding."<sup>6</sup> This entails the construction of hybrids which continue being able to use some of the old idiom while doing without its foundationalist assumptions. Like Rorty, it is a post-analytic style which generally appreciates and welcomes the loss of final authority assumed by one's *own* institutional background, treating it more with irony than defiance. Jencks defines "double coding" as "the combination of Modern techniques with something else (usually traditional building) in order for architecture to communicate with the public and a concerned minority, usually other architects."<sup>7</sup> And this, with little substitution, defines Rorty's work: the combination of late analytic techniques with something else (usually traditional pragmatism) in order for philosophy to communicate with a wider literary public and a concerned minority, usually the philosophical profession. The effort is to institute more successful and effective links with the larger cultural environment and with history than the analytic discourse of Modernism managed.

---

<sup>6</sup> Cf. C. Jencks, The Language of Post-Modern Architecture, 1984 and What is Post-Modernism?, 1986 for a thorough discussion of his notion of "double" or "dual coding."

<sup>7</sup> Jencks, 1986:14.

What links the rhetorician, the pragmatist and the post-modern aesthete is their pluralism. On the one hand, *philosophical* aesthetics has continuously searched for universals (of judgement) and onto-foundations (of form) to *identify* art vis-à-vis a more elevated Philosophy -- the Kantian legacy. On the other hand, Modernist art theory (since the rise of Dada and early surrealism up to abstract expressionism) has itself competed with ever more ideologized manifestoes to proclaim their own <sup>i</sup>oppositional ultimacy. Post-modern aesthetics undermines them both simultaneously in terms of its explicit commitment to pluralism, and in a way which has become a provocation also for the rest of intellectual culture (judging from the increasingly large amount of literature which feels obliged to make reference to it). Post-modern products, by using the results of previous polemics as rhetorical devices, rhetoricizes itself in the process -- suggesting that our antecedents are, in end effect, ours; that the writer/maker might have a number of entirely different perspectives within his lifetime; indeed, a number of careers within a single sentence or work itself. (Both Eco and Copland will be examples of this.)

Take, as Jencks does, James Stirling's addition to the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart: his ironic use of classical details, his "Acropolis" above the indifferent BMW driving by, his parking garage with a classical base ironically mixing with the necessities of parking laws. To create holes for legally required ventilation, it appears as if stones have been punched out and left as "ruins" on the ground,



revealing not the "insides" of the classical world (marble) but the steel frames which counter the skin-deep beauty hanging on them. He juxtaposes genres and styles which the "analytic" beliefs of the Modernist would have disallowed for the following reasons of faith: "'truth to materials,' 'logical consistency,' 'straightforwardness,' 'simplicity' -- all the (analytic) values and rhetorical tropes celebrated by such Modernists as Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe."<sup>8</sup> Stirling double codes local function and architectural-historical commentary, the new and the old, the practical and the elite, the inside and the outside, (or, as Dewey put it, the "pragmatic and the experimental, the artistic and the everyday") without ontological hierarchies being established to make these otherwise "crucial distinctions." This is an ironic mixing of use of and criticism of the recent past which resists ideologizing it as a monolithic advance in art or culture. The post-modern product communicates with both popular and professional signs to an eclectic and pluralistic culture.

It is this pragmatic and pluralistic sentiment of the post-modern which has encouraged the replacement of single truth with many genres, using combinatorial metaphors not as ornaments but as its aesthetic/cultural *premise*, no longer worrying (like Derrida) about a unified Tradition of father figures to be fought but, rather, (like Rorty) nonchalantly avoiding the "problem" when it constitutes itself in that way. It produces no homogenous bourgeois "crisis" against which the political crusaders of the

---

<sup>8</sup> Jencks, 1986:18.

avant-garde develop their counter insurgencies. Nor does it produce a *nihilist* "crisis" in art against which the cultural conservatives of truth construct those worrying deconstructors who are ransacking the edifice of Modernist accomplishment -- (the genre of "truth"). Post-modernism bids farewell to these embittered opposites as two unnecessary personages "who have washed each other's hands for more than a century, a stormy but enduring mutual accomodation"<sup>9</sup> based on the shared vocabulary of the "crisis of truth." Post-modern vocabularies have appropriated local vernaculars and regional traditions to offer a pastiched reading of "the Tradition" as an heroic "side-show" (Rorty), but containing in this pastiche its own moralistic narrative. By appealing to genres rather than truth, styles and narratives rather than grounds or foundations, it is saying that it "would be better to be frankly ethnocentric" (Rorty),<sup>10</sup> to admit the limits of changing vernaculars without attempting to build a "cathedral of the future" (Gropius) to house and protect them.

---

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Charles Newman, The Post-Modern Aura, 1985:198.

<sup>10</sup> Rorty, "Habermas and Lyotard on Postmodernity," 1984:166 and 175, argues that the benefit of a "post-modernist form of social life" is its ability to function constructively in a way which "asserts itself without bothering to ground itself."

### 6.3 POST-MODERN TEXTS:

Post-modern texts, as John Barth has said, are not written in order to refute Modernism but to democratize and replenish its own generic possibilities, no longer pretending that the texts of the art/philosophical world are the trains pulling the rest of culture but, rather, slippery skateboards trying to pull the train of its own traditions, more self-mocking of the position of the middle-class writer no longer able to sustain his romantic and hyperbolic self-image as the "outsider" in opposition to all the "insides" of bourgeois rationality<sup>11</sup> -- a framing trope which Foucault has often fallen into. The post-modern writer is, as Rorty suggests, reestablishing ties to his community by leaving behind the objectivist pretensions that there was a privileged form of textuality (say, realism or high-modernist anti-realism) which separated the writer from his context. And Umberto Eco is an excellent example of these virtues.

Eco's The Name of the Rose successfully combines the careers of the historical novel and discourses on post-structur<sup>a</sup>list philosophy of language, ironically choosing the otherwise dark and sterile Middle Ages made so unredeemable by Renaissance aesthetes as the venue for the contemporary, post-modern chase of "the sign." He borrows the genre of the detective story and transposes Sherlock Holmes into a witty monk investigating signs (of murder) which leave no *referential* trace. The self-parodies of their God-

---

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Barth, "The Literature of Replenishment," 1980.

talk and their juxtaposition to original as well as imported dialogues about signification make it impossible to distinguish the genuine from the contemporary<sup>ar</sup>, Occam from Saussure, the straightforward from the artifice, philosophical disputation from good 'ol story-telling<sup>12</sup> -- mixing the structures of opera-buffa, Agatha Christie and Aquinas. The book is an allegory about the Book, about writing, about method, about chasing signs (of murder) back to the vested interests of the librarian (Jorge, who himself alludes the writer Jorge Luis Borges); and it is accomplished by mixing the ironies and paradoxes of medieval metaphysics and deconstructionist rhetoric. William, the detective monk-semiotician, finds himself investigating connections between signs, between genres, between texts and deaths, between lost pages and censorship, making associations which produce no order, no system; thereby finding himself in the (post-modern) situation of having to imagine possible disorders as crucial for imagining possible orders, until the final ironic twist. What Jorge, the culprit, has feared and protected is the second book of Aristotle and Aristotle's tendency to see laughter as a force for good, as having instructional value which, like metaphors, can re-orient and alter perspective. But why fear Aristotle's reference to the rhetorical power of laughter, especially *Aristotle's*? Because, says Jorge, "the divine mystery of the Word was

---

<sup>12</sup> Eco, Reflections on *The Name of the Rose*, 1985, has remarked how often readers have wrongly identified the quotations from the constructions, finding that what appear to be Derridean remarks are statements taken out of original manuscripts and *vice versa*.

transformed into a human parody of categories and syllogism. . . Every word of the Philosopher, by whom now even saints and prophets swear, has overturned the image of the world. But he has not succeeded in overturning the image of God. If this book were to become . . . had become an object for open interpretation, we would have crossed the last boundary." But what was frightening in *his* discussion of laughter, pursues William. . . "But here, here" [says Jorge, striking the table] "here the function of laughter is reversed, it is elevated to art, the doors of the world of the learned are opened to it, it becomes the object of philosophy, and the perfidious theology . . . [T]his book could teach learned men the clever and, from that moment, illustrious artifices that could legitimize the reversal, . . . an operation of the belly would be transformed into an operation of the brain. That laughter is proper to man is a sign of our limitation, sinners that we are. But from this book many corrupt minds like yours would draw the extreme syllogism, . . . it could strike the Luciferine spark that would set a new fire to the whole world, and laughter would be defined as the new art, unknown even to Prometheus, for canceling fear.

And Jorge continues with echoes back to Gorgias and forward to Nietzsche and Derrida: "And this book . . . would induce false scholars to try to redeem

the lofty with a diabolical reversal: through the acceptance of the base. . . But on the day when the Philosopher's word would justify the marginal jests of the debauched imagination, or when what has been marginal would leap to the center, every trace of the center would be lost." (And then another twist. By finding reference to Gorgias in Aristotle's text, Gorgias is brought off the margin to decenter Aristotle's *own* critique, to make Aristotle himself the threat.) "A Greek philosopher (whom your Aristotle quotes here, an accomplice and foul auctoritas) said that the seriousness of opponents must be dispelled with laughter, and laughter opposed with seriousness; . . . [and] this must be restrained and humiliated, and intimidated by sternness."



Then, one more outburst by Jorge (still preparing for Danto) and William's casual response: "But if one day somebody, brandishing the words of the . . .

Philosopher and therefore speaking as a philosopher, were to raise the weapon of laughter to the condition of subtle weapon, if the rhetoric of conviction were replaced by the rhetoric of mockery, if the topics of the patient construction of the images of redemption were to be replaced by the topics of the impatient dismantling and upsetting of every holy and venerable image -- oh, that day even you, William, and all your knowledge, would be swept away!"

"Why? I would match my wit with the wit of others. It would be a better world than the one where the fire and red-hot iron of Bernard Gui humiliate the fire and red-hot iron of Dolcino."

Eco ends the post-modern tale, not surprisingly, without final resolution, replenishing the different genres used by ironically mixing them (but not closing them), as humanized and democratized by laughter -- that which always "distorts the face of truth." The vehicles of the book vary widely in time and vernacular style, becoming coherent in the context of their rhetoricity, double coded for the historical/academic elite, and (by being narrated by Adso who confesses to *not* being able to understand everything, and with whom the reader can, therefore, identify and feel exonerated for not always following) it is accessible to the popular reader of intrigue and suspense. (Eco reports one reader who was "affected" by the sustained allusions to theological debates as if they were the background "suspense" music of a Hitchcock movie.) Eco has so many texts off his back but under his belt (Recall Barth, p. 34.) that the book becomes a

conversation between books -- an ironic plurality of levels without an omniscient narrator telling us the truth.

#### 6.4 INTERPRETING THE MODERNIST SCORE:

But the modernist worry about (post-modern) plurality is not simply an (epistemological) argument from "truth"; it is also an argument which makes appeal to the (political) "necessities" of cultural history. The rhetoric of the modern is, in Schönberg's case, the search for a *single* code, entirely elite, which can throw off his back the weight of the entire tonal tradition of Western music. It is primarily the belief in necessary and irreconcilable oppositions: again, an aesthetic and a Philosophy coincide to produce an inexorable authority. In 1936 Schönberg wrote: "*Supposing times were normal* -- normal as they were before 1914 -- then the music of our time would be in a different situation." One can easily see and accept that cultural upheaval and controversy are central to the significance of Schönberg's music, and that the ritual riot with which the Viennese received modern(ist) works is part of the aesthetic polemic of Schönberg's locality; but he goes on to write (about the George songs) that he was already by 1910 . . . "conscious of having broken through every restriction of a bygone aesthetic; . . . (And, with echoes of Zarathustra.) I feel now how hotly even the least of temperaments will rise in revolt, and suspect that even those who have so far believed in me will not want to acknowledge the

necessary nature of this development. . . I am being forced in this direction. . . I am obeying an inner compulsion which is stronger than any upbringing."<sup>13</sup> Notice the *classical* oppositions: inner *versus* outer, internal "compulsion" *versus* external "upbringing;" in other (older) words we can hear again the (neoplatonic) refrain which Isocrates had rejected: *physis versus nomos* -- nature *versus* civilization. Schönberg appeals to nature in order to crush tradition; while, to his opponents, he broke the "natural laws of music" in the name of an artificial system. Both sides trade on the rhetorical *reversability* of the dichotomy; for both have the need to naturalize and universalize their view as the technique of legitimization. It is the cultural career of this philosophical/aesthetic coincidence which (I will argue) Copland's work (for one) helped make an expendable and unnecessarily inhibiting rhetoric with which to develop a post-romantic genre of music (and of *writing* about music).

There was, of course, a great deal of interdependence of modernist rebellion. Der Blaue Reiter, the document of German Expressionism (coordinating the work of Kirchner, Nolde, Klee and Kandinsky, for example) included nearly as many articles on music, as well as facsimile manuscripts by Webern and Berg, and discussions of Skryabin by Schönberg. And Schönberg thought of himself for some time as a painter. It was the political imagery of

---

<sup>13</sup> Cited by Charles Rosen, Arnold Schoenberg, 1981:5,6, who is citing Willi Reich, Arnold Schoenberg: A Critical Biography, 1971:49 -- a certainly more adulatory than critical account. My account also refers to Schönberg's Style and Idea, 1950, and Adorno's philosophical/aesthetic apologetics in Philosophy of Modern Music, 1973.

rebellion and revolution which unified these movements, a rebellion as much against "nature" as "convention" precisely because "nature" was seen through conventions. The two were appealed to as different and as interchangeable enemies precisely because no firm distinction could be found and sustained. What eventually did order the attack on "convention" was its association with what presently pleased a public toward which the modernists had a latent hostility. The Baroque, classical and romantic genres couldn't be borrowed from because they became lumped together as one paradigm which the conspiratorially complacent bourgeoisie found accessible. (As we will see, Copland exchanged the post-1914 anxiety and aestheticized hysteria of the modernists for an easier and less monistic relationship to the tradition.)

Reviewing the *cultural* polemic is crucial for understanding why and how the *ontological* vocabulary used to justify or attack these new musical conventions acquired the pragmatic function it did. The development of Wagner's chromaticism and Brahms' asymmetrical phrasing became, after 1908, a total chromaticism which was linked to the need to express extreme emotional states. (Cf. [or, listen to] the interrelationship between atonality and the nightmare of *Erwartung*.) In other words, there is a relationship (intensified by modernists) between culture (in "crisis"), emotion and musical technique which is not *ontologically* different from, but a *conventional* extension of, the themes of romanticism. What makes the philosophical/aesthetic context pragmatic is the failure

of a naturalistic or onto-foundational vocabulary to deal with the changing, but for that reason, persistent links between music, emotion, technique and culture. The post-Wagnerian "breakdown" of Western harmony was the breakdown of a convention in conflict with another convention, a breakdown (or tension) implied in Wagner himself and exacerbated by the public as well as "private" (artistically and communally angst-ridden) mood of an anxious culture, a culture which looked to and responded to the products and socially implicated images its artworld produced in very detailed political and economic ways. Recognizing the very mixed generative conditions which produced this music, and, indeed, due to the reaction it provoked, entails recognizing the reciprocal looping (as Dewey wrote) "of the complex relations between art, culture and experience."

Parenthetically, my polemic here is aimed against essentially three different styles of doing Anglo-American (primarily analytic) aesthetics. 1. The Danto/Dickie "artworld"-concept: This is far too vague, formal and thin a notion to be able to accommodate the complex and twisting context of social relations that arise in modernist and post-modernist communities. The "artworld" is a concept which (certainly counters attempts to ground the aesthetic in purely sensory terms, but which) "analytically" circles in on itself (*conceptually*) without making contact with the "synthetically" political, economic and ideological relations *within* which the "institution of the artworld" functions when attributing or denying "status" (Dickie) to works -- works



themselves made within and "referring" to a plurality of different and competing communities of practitioners, who criticize and/or solicit non-artworld institutions and markets in a variety of (aesthetically) relevant ways.<sup>14</sup> In other words, the "artworld" is still being written within the genre of formalistic concept-aesthetics.

2. The Langer, Goodman symbol orientation: This more fundamentally formalist approach attempts to determine either "what an art work represents, expresses and exemplifies by determining what symbol system it is to be fitted into" (Goodman); or by determining the symbolic nature of art by empty semiotic comparison with (opposition to) "propositionally representational language" (Langer). Again, as different as Langer and Goodman are in some respects, their abstractions are based on over-straining the ability of a formalistic analogy with language to do any work whatever in assessing the varied and relevant ways in which the different arts interrelate *ideologically* to each other (in ways not captured by their *notational* "identities" and differences); nor has the abstract "symbol system" approach an apparatus which can chart the social relations which modernist and post-modernists have themselves (intentionally) made relevant to their enterprise.

3. More specifically regarding music and syntax-driven theories: The neo-Kantian tradition of writing about music, from Eduard

---

<sup>14</sup> For an elaboration of this point, cf. Waartofsky, M. W., "Art, Artworlds, and Ideology," J. of Aesth. and Art Criticism, Spring, 1980:239-248.

Hanslick, Deryck Cooke and Leonard Meyer to the analytic philosopher Malcolm Budd,<sup>15</sup> sets up and endorses a dualistic vocabulary or frame to distinguish (ontologically) the inside from the outside, the syntax from the semantics, the structure from the social meaning and interpretation and experience of music. Neo-Kantian contemplation is set against emotional response (Hanslick), the intramusical is set against the extramusical experience (Meyer), i.e., the "intrinsic" is distinguished from the "extrinsic" (Budd). All of the above are attempts at separating music (as "form") from an historical and social context. Budd, most recently (Music and the Emotions, 1985), although carefully rebutting the weaknesses of these grand onto-narratives, simply ends up eulogising the "intrinsically musical" in a way which functions primarily to *reaffirm a philosophical* idiom which utterly neglects the history of music, music theory and music criticism. In effect, he "clearly" rebuts their "arguments," and is convincingly suspicious of their ontological and linguistic analogues, but his own analysis functions equally well to disembodify music and separate it from criticism and history. That is, his "interest is philosophical, not historical." Thus he too goes on to use an ontological idiom to gloss historical myopia: By identifying what is "inherently rewarding" in music, he simply presupposes a traditional tonal canon, treats the complex paradigmatic changes in music as uncontroversial and "philosophically" irrelevant, and he adopts the unacknowledged

---

<sup>15</sup> Cf., Hanslick, The Beautiful in Music, 1891, (1957 edition), Cooke, The Language of Music, 1959, Meyer, Emotion and Meaning in Music, 1956, and Music, The Arts, And Ideas, 1969, and Budd's refereeing of these (amongst other) positions, Music and the Emotions, 1985.

romantic formulation of the "inherent" and emotionally "innermost" resonance of music as that which is *philosophically* "analytic" in the "nature" of music. In other words, these three styles of analytic aesthetics are formalistic, ahistorical and unable to connect with the *socially* burdened theories which have so preoccupied art and our *experience* of art since the rise of modernism. They appeal to a socially "autonomous" genre of philosophy as a way to write about art which is itself a thoroughgoing critique of this "autonomy."

In extending the language analogy to music, in attempting to uncover a stable notational syntax, this form of methodological formalism has bypassed what it is that has *changed*, and how precipitous the whole question of such stability was in the cultural circumstances of Schönberg. The point is that the "language" of music is not in the notation simply or even primarily; it is in the *experience* (interpretation, reading or whatever) of the traditional schema ("language") of harmony. And it was indeed this musical system which was experienced in radically different ways, which was used and transformed fundamentally within single works. It might even require a long period of time (years, in most people's case) of listening before this new "language" can be accepted as a *different* and competing paradigm over and against that which has previously been considered as the organizational "basis" of its predecessor. But, the values of atonal music -- in its rhythm, dissonance, tone color, accent -- and the non-notational cultural anxiety which suffused them are not traceable in the formalistic

preoccupations of aesthetics when it continues transposing historical changes in music into linguistic/syntactic structures. With atonality comes music "based" precisely on the instability of a system of values (Recall Nietzsche.), of given units of meaning. The instability of the traditional categories of musical understanding is one of the *goals* of such music. And without this minimal requirement that the musical/cultural intention of modernist music be grasped, the general ontological identity of music sought by aestheticians will remain an irrelevant "achievement," out of touch with the traditions they *intend* to talk about.<sup>16</sup>

The traditional "semiotics" of scales, arpeggios, of harmonically related materials, the "semiotics" of all the traditionally "given" units of musical construction were given up for short, highly expressive miniatures, put together note by note to make wholes which, when heard as such, *had* no syntax, no single organizational principle. The logic or anti-logic of such work is incomprehensible without being aware of the "non-musical" ethos of "crisis" which attended the (especially European, even more especially German) modernist music of the early part of this century. That these

---

<sup>16</sup> The desire to locate underlying notational identities and syntactic structures out of the context of the varying intentions of contingent and emergent historical/aesthetic communities is a gripe which Margolis has continuously put to Goodman and to the semiotics of music generally; and I think rightly so. Margolis has also made some sort of pragmatic rapprochement with Wittgenstein's and Adorno's commitment to the context of (artistic) "praxis" as important in assessing intentional dimensions to the "semiotics" of modern art. In other words, (*passim* syntax-driven theories of art vis-à-vis Wittgenstein and Adorno) "[T]here can be no hierarchical relationship between practices and the would-be rules of practices." Cf. Margolis' "On the Semiotics of Music," 1984:13, an unpublished essay, so far as I know.

ideological and political polarizations, along with a party-political avant-garde, have been largely absent from much American modernism, is one reason why a more pragmatic (occasionally complacent) post-modern aesthetic was more quickly developed by Copland. As dissonance (and fragmentation) might be the primary modernist metaphor (Adorno), as was consonance (and unity) the metaphor of 18<sup>th</sup>-century aesthetics, their mixture (pluralistically) is the order (-disorder) of the day with respect to the post-modern, and with its relationship to tradition, culture and technique. This plurality is achievable by playing on the pragmatic (that is, *non-foundational*) semiotic and syntactical *looseness* of these relations, a looseness which the post-modern artworlds have found much more productively beneficial and obvious to themselves than have the philosophical aestheticians busy chasing syntactic "laws."<sup>17</sup>

The argument here is that the relevance of one-concept aesthetics (everything is "beautiful," "expressive," "significant form," "part of a syntactic structure," etc.) is generated by a genre of philosophy,

---

<sup>17</sup> Typical of such analytic excess is Beardsley, who writes that "we have no warrant for taking a musical composition to refer to anything at all outside itself . . . , there is no such thing as interpreting music." (in Beardsley, The Aesthetic Point of View, 1982:182.) Francis Sparshott is also attracted by the global power of semiotic generalization, telling us that sound is either a sign (which "we *need* to attend to") or a symbol ("*designed* for attention"). He takes one step closer to history than Saussure in that (unlike Saussure) he is interested less in "ideal languages" than in actual historical and social "praxis;" but he still presumes that there is, in some relevant sense, some embracing and underlying "system" of which these practices are a part. Sparshott, The Theory of the Arts, 1982:18. But contrast Beardsley's "there is no such thing as interpreting music" with the musicologist Charles Rosen's view that interpretation and criticism are "at the center of the work of art:" in Rosen's "The Ruins of Walter Benjamin," 1977:32. Rosen is of course starting here where most analytic musicologists stop: with modernism.



promoting a philosophical interest already deconstructed by the artworlds it attempts to assimilate. Calling art expressive is a trivial truth presented as a philosophical achievement which does not and cannot ask what the expressive *differences* are between the many aesthetic rhetorics brought into opposition (by modernists) or mixed together (by post-modernists). Nor is consonance and the "liberation of dissonance" (Schönberg) a new structural discovery. For they will both, like the other distinctions which have been mentioned (inside/outside, intrinsic/extrinsic) be debated about in specific historical moments, and constituted in those different cultural moments. And needless to say, prevailing conventions of what is consonant and/or dissonant, what is intrinsic and/or extrinsic, what is syntactically or semantically relevant to music have varied radically in different cultures, and have been decided upon not by the physics of the human ear, or the "laws of nature," or a *prioristic* philosophy, but in traditions of *practice*. Nor are the notions of "practice," "style" and "rhetoric" ontological notions. On the contrary, they are used to *discourage* the constitution of a philosophical genre which goes hunting for (or uses aesthetics as a genre to go hunting for) foundations which ontologically structure the arts, and/or sustain them as one single entity capturable by a philosophy so inclined. Rather, it seems that a study of the intentional changes (especially since the advent of modernism) of the various arts ought to have the reciprocally persuasive power to convince philosophy to give up this endeavor.

As *disruption* (of "structures" or conventions) and dissonance became large scale (and totalizing) devices for modernists, post-modernists were led to pluralize, mix and ironize these conventions. And as generic stability is no longer the goal of such products, it becomes all the more dubious to treat any one stability or genre or convention as analytic to all of them. The *rhetoric* of music (including its social/contextual dimensions) would seem a more appropriate critical "category" to apply than the "semiotics" or "structure" of music in the same way as it has been in the previous chapters regarding texts and their lack of a groundable structure.<sup>18</sup> That is, talking of the arts in terms of their *rhetorics* implies a post-structuralist plurality which makes the "achievement" of a "deeper" philosophical generality already redundant. It implies, as Dewey wrote, that to art, like philosophy, criticism is more relevant than ontological pigeon-holing. What links our previous discussion, of dialectic and its

---

<sup>18</sup> There is at present a significant shift in musicology away from analytic musicology ("Just study the score.") to musicology interested in the history of ideas, rhetoric and criticism. (J. Kerman's *Musicology*, 1985, charts such a course generally; and R. Subotnik, "Musicology and Criticism," 1982, does so more specifically.) In this regard, the notion of rhetoric is being taken up in primarily two senses: 1. <sup>no</sup> Rather than aligning music with some ontological theory about its autonomous and hermetic structure, it is being considered as a social discourse, as a persuasive idiom, as cognitive, symbolic and communicative as any other art. 2. Musicologists are unearthing historical interconnections between composers musical sketches and their readings of specific rhetorical texts and constructs, inquiring into the possible "correlation between rhetorical analogies and compositional principles." (Cf. Maniates, "Applications of the History of Ideas," 1982:47.) On specific rhetorical readings of music, cf. Maniates, "Music and Rhetoric: Faces of Cultural History in the Renaissance and the Baroque," 1982; on the proximity of rhetorical concepts and the historical vitality of the fugue, cf. Butler, G. G., "Fugue and Rhetoric," 1977:49-109, and also Butler's "Music and Rhetoric in Early 17th-century English Sources," 1980:53-64; and on the "intra-musical" and "extra-musical" clues left by Bach as to his relationship to Quintilian's views on symbolic devices, cf. Kirkendale, U., "The Source for Bach's Musical Offering," 1980:99-141.

battle with rhetoric, of foundationalism and its battle with pragmatism, structuralism with post-structuralism, and modernism with post-modernism (Stirling and Eco), is the lack of a fixed key to unlock the one structure or the true and right interpretation. What all the latter proponents in the aforementioned battles have in common (and what the post-modern raises to a goal) is the *positive* use one can make of putting *different* keys together (in the same work) for a variety of (rhetorical) purposes.

Again, with respect to music, even the "atomic" unit of the note is no longer ultimately stable. (Strauss is known to have worried that the growing virtuosity of the modern professionalized orchestra would give an undesired clarity to passages composed to sound not discreet but sweeping and technically blurred. And contemporary jazz, especially improvisational jazz, continues (unbeknownst to much analytic musicology) to function *without* scores, without sustaining a demonstrable "identity" of a "work" between performances, always treating the "note" as a metaphor for musical use and experiment.) Tonality too, becomes not a "given" but a quotation of an expendable idiom. And post-modern music does quote and reconstruct the tonal genre without the all-or-nothing polemic which obsessed Schönberg and his group. Due primarily to the political metaphors within which it was discussed, tonality was a "tyranny" which either would pull one all the way into its "system" or should be destroyed altogether. Schönberg considered any reference to tonality as an hypocritical

compromise. Whereas, those less tied to modernist "theory" (Britten, Copland) found their expression enhanced by the retention of old *and* new musical rhetorics without the modernist moralizing. (Adorno became even more uncompromising than Schönberg in this regard, adopting a completely mandarin dogmaticism regarding the allowable values of music. Primarily for neo-marxist ideological reasons, there was to be no compromise with a musical rhetoric which would give it accessibility to the "Kulturindustrie.")

The point to all this decentering and disruption of musical convention was that the new work would lose its critical power and experimental value if it offered a centering point of reference which could be appealed to and appropriated by "bourgeois culture." It was an attempt to prevent any motif from becoming the point of reference by which the others could be understood. The worry was, like Lyotard's critique of metanarratives still, that *any* provisional narrative center or order would be a damning compromise with repression and illegitimate masters. And it is precisely this which pushed Schönberg into three forms of pragmatic inconsistency. The first was the practical problem of producing large scale and more heroic forms to compete with the tradition when the ideology of composition was to produce totally expressive, intense miniatures which were completely saturated for the sake of a fierce aesthetic explosion. The second pragmatic inconsistency was the paradoxical tyranny the critique of tyranny took on. The miniature allowed one total control over the form,

leaving nothing to spontaneity or improvisation. The improvisational democracy of jazz was unthinkable. Order returned as the obsession of the atonal and serialist composer. And thirdly, the formation of the "Society for the Private Performance of Music" (as part of the critique of the pressures of commercialism, of the public and its "culture industry") was an attempt to cut off precisely those pressures which produced the rapid development of a less sup<sup>p</sup>ressed and more experimental secular music from Bach to Schönberg. In other words, it is in the context of these pressures that the notion of musical obsolescence and development (which Schönberg depended upon) became built into the arts. The attempt to go private sustained the pretense that art transcended social utility, and it sustained the contradiction that it could later feed a market which *wants* of course only that which wasn't produced merely for the purpose of consumption in the first place. And in this regard too, the post-modern has adopted a different aesthetic/commercial strategy. The commercial substratum to the production of the arts is a relationship to the public which post-moderns handle with more irony, democracy and positive, constructive acceptance. Without producing *an* answer to the dilemmas this relation entails, there is



an acceptance of the working connection between the aesthetic and other public discourses.<sup>19</sup>

It was the transition from the atonal to the serialistic technique which helped solve the problem of generating larger forms. On the basis of the formalistic rigor demanded by the twelve tone row, Schönberg could compose with the bauhaus purity of a sterilized structure, in terms of an unbreakable "rule of derivation." But Schönberg, for example in the Suite for Piano, opus 25, could also demonstrate great suppleness with the technique, allowing him also to recapture classical forms. The series bridged the atonal gap to the tradition as a sort of "transformational grammar" which allowed for change and development within a piece. But he and his technique were still chauvinistically opposed to the rising success of Russian and French music; and the enmity between the Neoclassicism of Paris (Stravinsky) and the serialism of Vienna (Schönberg) is well known.<sup>20</sup> But it was Copland who broke down the "theoretical"

---

<sup>19</sup> I don't wish to let the post-modernists off the commercialist hook: The relationship especially of architects to their (usually corporate) sponsors is certainly ambivalent; and it is not entirely irrelevant that they design and produce more corporate headquarters than low income housing, more banks than public toilets. But the other side is the less hostile and authoritarian relationship they tend to engender between the aesthetic "codes" of the profession and accomodating the desires of the local client. The architect I. M. Pei's *Peking Hotel in Fragrant Hills* is an example of an attempt to accomodate Modernist technique, early Renaissance and Chinese vernacular traditions. (Cf. Jencks, 1984:156.) And about his relationship to his clients, he has said (in a pubic radio interview) "they deserve 40% of the credit" -- an unthinkable relationship (or ratio) to the Modernist. For a view which puts post-modern architecture under much critical pressure to perform an ameliorative function of political resistance, cf. Kenneth Frampton's "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance," in *The Anti-Aesthetic*, (ed.) H. Foster, 1983.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *Perspectives on Schoenberg and Stravinsky*, (eds.) Boretz and Cone, 1972.

opposition by combining both styles as rhetorics not incompatible "truths." What Copland more freely exploited was the many functions of tonality which could be used within the confines of serialism, and, thereby, providing an eclectic way to refer to the tradition, to reestablish links by using modernist dogma as a useful genre in the production of mixed-genre works.

Serialism wrote itself into paradox (not unlike Derrida has done). Schönberg also felt the need to see himself as preserving what he was transmuting in such a radical way. By totalizing "the Tradition" and totalizing the need to escape it, but wanting to remain internal to its development as its necessary and logical outcome, he suffered the difficult consequences which the "violence" of this I-want-to-be-outside-inside paradox produces. Schönberg was obsessed with the idea of a "single source" for music, believing that "the Tradition" had in essence only one. Schönberg produced the myth of "the Tradition" and then the need to offer his own replacement, the series, "pure form," the new and single generative source. The aesthetic spinoffs of this foundational quest were of course many and important works. Schönberg did manage to provide new conventions and the possibility of a radically altered form or idiom, indeed to satisfy non-musical feelings which were *not* dualistically separated from the musical forms which they entered. Schönberg, too, offered a totalizing reading of the tradition. But it is Copland who, in comparison, pragmatizes the interpretation of the score, who

reads the variety of musical genres in the most pluralistic and non-hierarchical way.

## 6.5 INTERPRETING POST-MODERN SCORES:

The post-modernist rereads his traditions; and performing a re-reading is not unlike the work of performing a piece of music. An "historical" (exegetical) performance of Bach is not a copy, it is not truer than a contemporary one. The score and the music are not merely dependent on the old instruments (and his keyboard work is probably less so (dependent) than, say, Monteverdi's or Scarlatti's). And the music, and its dynamic (rather than static) array of aesthetic/musical values, will be enriched by *both* styles of interpretation. Likewise, one cannot wholly represent Plato's text (i.e., read him in a bygone Athens) any more than one could (or must) carry around the historical marble hall and harpsichord to represent Bach. On a physical/instrumental level, representation is impossible, the post-modernist adds that it is not desirable.

The dense contrapuntal structure of a Bach fugue may receive different color (or rhetorical tone) on a different instrument (i.e., on a piano as opposed to an organ), as may a text when read and <sup>u</sup>counterpointed with a contemporary interest (as opposed to an "historical" disinterest). Indeed, it may make the "text" or piece *more* "successful" when played on different (critical) instruments. Bach's A minor Fantasy ("Prelude") may be more "successful," (or

appreciably different) when played on a piano rather than a harpischord; as might a Platonic text when re-played less as a piece of Philosophical Epistemology than as an innovative dialectical art, or perhaps a treatise on education, or (as Dewey suggested) as a piece on political utopianism. Such critical transcriptions of works can help and/or impede interpretation, but judging this is not done by comparing the interpretation to the "real voice itself." It depends on the particular performance.

Did Bach's transcription get Vivaldi "right," or Busoni Bach? Did Dewey get Plato "right," or Rorty Dewey? The text "itself" does not adjudicate between these possibilities. And there are no *a priori* rules to follow which will guarantee the legitimacy of one performance over the other. Reading and writing, quotation and criticism cannot be *literal* re-readings or re-writings any more than note for note renditions of a score can be. Successful performances depend on the range of conventionally accepted variations which these things always entail; there are changes in the material instruments (the *objects* used), in location (the place played -- be it church, lecture hall or pub), and changes with respect to the contextual interest in, and function of (why play it *now*) a performance. In effect, in the arts we have performance traditions, in the sciences research traditions, and in philosophy and literature critical/exegetical traditions. These "things," these discourses change (and have good reason to), and with them the "things themselves."

For Dewey, the text, the building, the painting, the dance and the music are not "things:" they are media embodying communicative relations. And Aaron Copland is a pragmatic/composer case in point. His art was not a "modernist" polarization of old and new with structural pre-scriptions of what form the new was to take. Nor was it a late-modernist dualism which took the same "crisis" of the old "structure" for granted and opted for an anti-structure (Cage) and "the play of surfaces." His ability to use the technical formalism (analytic serialism) of the profession and the melodic vernacular of the "common man" was not, as Leonard Bernstein has called it, a musical "Manichean dualism." On the contrary, Copland attempted to undermine these dualisms: between, for example, neo-European abstraction (Schönberg) and the American folk song (Foster), between over-determined structure and improvisational Jazz, between the "progressive" compositional ideologies of a professional elite and popular social functions. (He wrote austere with European harmonies *and* the freedoms of Jazz in, for example, the "Piano concerto" of 1927.) His art has had no single location nor formed a single unitary text. His art, too, is not dualistic but "double coded for different taste cultures" (Jencks).

Unlike the more rhetorical exorbitations of modernist/postmodernist debate, Copland wrote: "I felt that it was worth the effort to see if I couldn't say what I had to say in the simplest possible terms."<sup>21</sup> In other words, neither his art nor his aesthetic

---

<sup>21</sup> Copland, A., "Composer from Brooklyn," in Our New Music, 1941.



theory was an attempt (stylistically) to overburden every bar or every sentence. This was not a relaxing of the "high standards" of the aesthete (*contra* Greenberg, p. 239) but an awareness of specific social functions, and the role of practical media: He composed for the radio ("Music for Radio"), for schools ("Outdoor Overture"), movies ("North Star", etc.), and for ballet ("Rodeo", etc.). These were not primarily "modernist" conceptual and meta-theoretical commentaries on the "nature" of the genre "itself." They were generically mixed for specific use (and even for non-professional performance; e.g., "Second Hurricane"). This contrasts also with Schönberg's Society for the Private Performance of Music: Copland had different musical rhetorics, all of them public, with no single ontology or masternarrative of music to constrain its functions. Rather than a private society, he helped found the American Composers Alliance as a support structure for new work; and he helped organize a music press for publishing "unprofitable" music.

To compose during the Depression (no more or less than any other period) meant that politics and economics were not anti-aesthetic (rhetorics or) experiential concerns easily effaced by a philosophical/aesthetic tradition of "disinterest" (Kant). For Copland, the "common man" still could be the subject and beneficiary of art; an art not categorically removed (or removeable) from the New Deal humanism and liberal idealism of his day; (an art, therefore, which could be suspiciously close to a sentimental patriotism and to the Rotarian rhetorical aspirations

associable with his "Lincoln Portrait").<sup>22</sup> But his local contribution did not become a metaphor for a global mythology of music (Wagner) or a melancholia of lost causes (Adorno). Copland's idiom changed and remained flexible. It had no single (totalizing) platform (like the True and Rational) and supported no static demarcation between the ("internal") score and the ("external") world, between the artistic and the useful, the ideal and the real, the given and the interpreted. His art disabused us of the need to call upon any dualism to lend the support required of such architectonics.

---

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Berger, A., Aaron Copland, 1953:esp. pp.27-29.

## 6.6 A DEFENCE OF "TRUTH" OR A DEFENCE OF GENRE?:

But Arthur Danto, a philosophical aesthete, is still wanting to write within an analytic performance tradition: where local contributions to art are redeemed by their participation in a global mythology of "truth;" where philosophy, despite its generic and historical variety, is still searching for this one legitimizing platform, requiring a firm demarcation between the given and the interpreted; where one ought to be worried that the canon which has so valiantly sought to support this endeavor is in serious danger of being desecrated by the "frivolous sadism of the deconstructionist;" and where one is still convinced that "the artworld" (in general) is in need of this genre of philosophy to explain its relationship to "the world" (in general). It is this sort of straight man whom the post-modernist parodies. But let us play along.

1. The protection of a genre: Danto writes: "Considering what has been happening to texts when treated in recent times, our canon seems suddenly fragile, and it pains the heart to think of them enduring the frivolous sadism of the deconstructionist. . . -- these unedifying violations."<sup>23</sup> Then consider the very revealing analogy Danto offers of submitting philosophy to a literary

---

<sup>23</sup> Danto, "Philosophy as/and/or Literature," 1985:64. The irony of Danto's appeal to save philosophy from becoming "mere" rhetoric with such an appeal to pathos (which "pains the heart") is enhanced when one recalls that Danto's plea is presented not first and foremost within a distancing and proof-oriented text, but as an oral and highly dramatic performance for the Eightieth Annual Eastern meeting of the American philosophical Association, December 28, 1983. I will develop this point further in the following pages.

(relativizing) style of reading: "the comparable perspective of the Bible-as-literature." What Danto regrets, like Eco's Jorge, is the transition from reading for truth to reading the text as text, as a powerful "kind of drama." He is concerned that in reading it as narrative rather than truth, "some fundamental relationship to the book will have changed when it sustains transfer to the curriculum as 'living literature'." Whereas the pragmatic, post-modern point is not only that this "transfer" has already taken place (vis-à-vis the Bible) but also that it is a positive achievement that style and "laughter can distort the face of truth." But for Danto, being left with Eco's William to "match his wit" without recourse to "the truth in all possible worlds" is clearly not good enough. For "no one could conceivably be interested in participating in the form of life defined by the literary form in issue [philosophy], were it not believed that this is the avenue to philosophical truth."<sup>24</sup> (Oh! Is that so?)

2. Truth over style: No one could accuse Danto of not being sensitive to style or of not being keenly aware of the varieties of genres which constitute "the canon:" aphorisms and *summae*, *pensees* and *Holzwege*, Grammatologies, Genealogies and Unscientific Postscripts, to mention only some of those he has mentioned and commented upon. What makes Danto so sly is his ability to appeal so competently to this variety as a way to criticize philosophers who have a "reduced concept of reading,"

---

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66. (Recall Abrams' parallel "If I can't do it all, I don't want to play" response, on p. 194 n.37, to the same deconstructionist enemy and the interpretational relativism he flaunts.)

while doing so in a way which doesn't allow the category of style to get near enough the philosophical center "to stultify the aspiration to truth."

3. Ontology versus the literary: Nor could one accuse Danto of consigning all literary fiction to falsehood or of believing that assessing literature against a philosophical concept of reference ("fictive reference") is the only route by which "literature derives what intellectual dignity philosophy can bestow."<sup>25</sup> But it is again the very criticism -- of "the extravagant ontological imagination of semantical theorists in proposing things for fictive terms to designate"<sup>26</sup> -- which Danto uses as an ironic stimulus to do better ontology. For, after all, it is to "the credit of this enterprise that it at least believes *some* connection between literature and the world is required."<sup>27</sup> And, presumably, philosophy is still that elevated arbiter who holds the literary in its left hand and "the world" in its right in order to explain to the rest of us the fit. In other words, Danto is still operating with a very subtle dualism between scheme and content, text and world, between the analytic and the synthetic; i.e., he is still separating rhetoric and truth with an evaluative rhetoric which passes out *complements* of "credit" for what a group "believes" without explaining either who's worried about the "connection between literature and the world" or what makes philosophy that special (*epistemological*) genre which will reestablish the "link" by showing us "the truth."

---

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.



In effect, Danto is a foundationalist at heart who appeals to the aesthetic as a clever justification for remaining so: and his view of the concept of *intertextuality* points this out.

4. The world versus the text: Danto sets up the polemic between himself and the "deconstructionist" as a contrast between two views: a. that "reference to the world works together with references to other art," versus b. the "intertextualist" view that all literature (or art), "just so far as it is literature, [is] about nothing" (Flaubert), that is, nothing "external to itself."<sup>28</sup> But Danto's ire has led him to miss the rhetorical (meta-philosophical) point being made by his opponent; and he has simultaneously demanded of himself an epistemological demonstration to justify his position. In other words, the deconstructionist "argument" is, firstly, *not* that literature is about nothing, but that it is not about something *given* (not written) which onto-philosophy will reveal to us without itself having produced its own text within a tradition of texts or genres at the same time. And secondly, for Danto to give his own contrast between text and world force, he is beholden to show us how it is that he knows how to detect the difference: and the epistemology required is not forthcoming. But thirdly and more elusively, Danto's appeal that we "need" a vocabulary that will order our productions into their "distinct ontological locations" (without himself providing the goods)

---

<sup>28</sup> Although Danto does not say explicitly to whom he is referring, it appears from the references that Geoffrey Hartman is the "representative" fall-guy for deconstruction.

highlights the *rhetorical* nature of his own appeal for a distinctly "philosophical" (non-literary) project.

And art gets pulled in to support the same project. That is, for Danto, art is *bound* to produce *philosophical* problems. Danto rightly, I think, credits Duchamp with success at having persuaded us (Danto says "discovered") "that nothing the eye can reveal will arbitrate the difference between a work of art and a mere real thing which resembles it in every outward particular." But just when the post-modernist successor to Duchamp might be expecting the follow up to this point to be something like: "That (Duchamp's) was a good way to criticise some stayed conventions, by mixing those two genres together -- the (anti-) aesthetic and the practical, by mixing the conventions of the gallery and loo. One might suppose that philosophy too is a conventional genre which could do with some sacrilegious mixing." Danto says, rather, that there is something "deeper" going on: Duchamp rattled the artworld "by proving that the problem was philosophical." The post-modern is saying quite the contrary: Duchamp played off one set of conventions against another. The contrast between aesthetic objects and "mere things" doesn't require a meta-genre called philosophy to show us what a problem we have: the differences involved are questioned and/or resolved pragmatically. In other words, Danto is struggling to find in art a real live philosophical dilemma which would distinguish in some principled way the difference between what critics do from what philosophers do, between what artists do and what philosophers

tell them they've done: and it is the "truth" which "constitutes" the difference.

How does Danto support the "difference?" Firstly, by confessing;<sup>29</sup> "[m]y own view is that philosophy wants to be more than universal; it wants necessity as well: truth for all the worlds that are possible."<sup>30</sup> What could be more imaginative? But what Danto wants philosophy to want isn't itself a strong enough "truth" to perform the needed service of distinguishing between "all worlds" and the ones contingent communities write into being (with texts); it is not strong enough to distinguish his own rhetoric of "necessity" from just more rhetoric. But why is Danto so loyal to this single view of the philosophical genre? Why does he submit himself to the epistemological failure his own distinctions force upon him. Why is it good enough for literature and art to be valued as "transfigurative,"<sup>31</sup> while philosophy should be exempt from such self-confessed rhetorical power? "Literature is, . . . (Danto writes), transfigurative, and in a way which cuts across the distinction between fiction and truth." But this complement to the versatility of art is a backhanded way of implying that philosophy *can* separate out for us fiction and truth, with a rhetoric which *doesn't* "cut across" the distinction between transfiguring and

---

<sup>29</sup> One might here recall the long tradition of referring to oneself as a rhetorical trope to write about a knowledge which transcends the self, from Isocrates through Descartes to the present.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>31</sup> Danto, in The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art, 1981, has argued as clearly and persuasively as anyone for the "philosophical" importance of the view that art is transfigurative rather than "imitational." It is precisely because he has done away with the imitational view that it is so difficult to understand what philosophy does if not transfigure. Imitate?

mirroring. That is, for philosophy to avoid tranfiguring, it must be able to mirror, to "copy as in the old days" -- (as Flaubert concludes his "book about nothing," Bouvard and Pécuchet).

But if it is already conventionally operative that we distinguish the genre of the poem from the philosophical dispute on the basis of genre (and not because one genre copies), why take the next step and propose a need for "truth" as the distinguishing "basis?" Will the genre be defiled because we have no epistemological foundation for elevating it to the top of the heap? Danto seems to think so; and it leads him to some very paradoxical positions regarding metaphor and philosophy's "escape" from it. "One mark of metaphors is their ineliminability, . . . But in philosophical as in scientific writing, what looks like a metaphor in the beginning ends as a fact, and it may be eliminated in favor of a technical term, as Locke begins with the natural light -- with "the candle within us" -- and ends with the technical term *intuition*. So what appear to be metaphors, what have been taken by deconstructionists to be metaphors, belong to philosophy as science, rather than to philosophy as literature." But precisely what is it that produced this sudden transition from metaphorical device to ontological fact? What is it that makes an intuition less metaphorical than a candle? What Derrida, Hesse and Kuhn have pointed out is that *science* is indeed highly literary, highly metaphorical. If, then, science is a better "basis" for philosophy or a better alliance than literature, it is not because it's being "technical" is a better *ontological* credential but because it

proposes certain interests and textual conventions that suit Danto's generic preferences. And Danto stands by these generic refrains and the rhetoric of "fact" because viewing philosophy as persuasive literature would simply be "a consolation prize for failing to be true."<sup>32</sup> But it can only be a consolation prize if the truth is "on hand" for comparison; and this "truth" Danto doesn't produce. Nor does he ever say what sort of procedure will reveal it. He offers an ontological-sounding distinction which collapses into generic rhetoric due to the lack of methodological and epistemological content that would be required to back it up. In effect, Danto won't be satisfied until he gets it both ways: metaphors are "ineliminable" *and* they "may be eliminated in favor of a technical term" or a "fact;" philosophy is scientific and literary; and its texts are "representations of a kind of reality [*and*] things to be *read*."<sup>33</sup> He wants his cake and to eat it too.

#### 6.7 A POST-MODERN GENRE WITHOUT TRUTH:

It has been said that one of the points of the modernists was to treat what a community had considered as "natural" and inviolable (aesthetic) "givens" (e.g., realism, tonality) as alterable genres and practices. The attempt to break down what had been considered to be the inherent constitution of these genres can be seen, (Jameson writes), as a "strategic feature of what must be called the *ideology of modernism*."<sup>34</sup> In other words, a genre

---

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>34</sup> Fredric Jameson, "Magical Narratives: Romance as Genre," *New Lit. Hist.*, 7, 1975:135.



doesn't fix anything. It is a strategic and pragmatic device for interpreting, placing and criticizing cultural products. But in Danto's case, having the "truth" seems to be the final complement paid to the successful *illusion* (*passim* Gombrich) that a philosophical genre has suddenly become a pure representation, that the type of text being written has suddenly been transfigured into a token of truth. Danto is attempting, on the basis of artworlds which *don't* have fixed genres, to fix philosophy's. As "genre" has become, even more tellingly for the post-modernist, a *pragmatic* metaphor and device for ordering and re-ordering art, it has remained, for Danto the philosopher, an *eliminable* metaphor for epistemological and ontological truth-telling.

To talk about genre in a post-modern sense (Recall Jencks, Stirling and Eco.) is no longer to aim at the elimination of ambiguity or metaphor but precisely at its ineliminability. And this is what (and the *way*) the rhetorician and the pragmatist have been arguing (writing) all along. To refer to Vaihinger again, "what we call truth, namely a conceptual world coinciding with the external world, *is merely the most expedient error*;"<sup>35</sup> or (*passim* Gombrich) the most expedient illusion. So, discussing philosophy as a genre or as genres is a way of saying that our comparisons between this "truth" and that "truth" are ways of moving between accounts, between texts. And reference to genre and style further

---

<sup>35</sup> Vaihinger, *op. cit.*, p. 108; and cited by A. Rosmarin, The Power of Genre, 1985:20. Rosmarin refers to Vaihinger in the context of arguing for a pragmatic (rather than analytic) notion of genre for literary studies. But what she says applies equally well to philosophy. Cf. especially her introduction and chapter 1. "Defining a Theory of Genre."

encourages the discussion of that text in ways which link it explicitly with the *strategies of other texts*; and it discourages making that "class" of texts being discussed so grand and foundational as to facilitate making the desired "error" too expedient. The shift to genre is not, firstly, an attempt to read a philosophical text as a novel. But if this self-conscious generic "mistake" is made, it is made for a critical purpose, as an edifying instruction in how else one can read such a text when doing so in terms of its coincidence with an external truth is no longer an option. What the literary critic argues is that reading a text in terms of a genre (in terms of its "belonging," as Fish has written, p. 139) is one of the enabling conditions of reading in the first place;<sup>36</sup> and *mixing genres* (as Rorty has written) is a way to read when the single-genre reading (for truth) is tired and broken down.<sup>37</sup> Post-modern works (both products and theory together), like Derrida and Rorty in philosophy, have unraveled the one-edifice hope. Their very eclectic mixing makes the rhetoricity and generic pluralism of their work highly visible rather than hidden. And this mixing highlights the constitutive power of the activity

---

<sup>36</sup> Derrida, in "The Law of Genre," writes that there is always genre and that there is no genreless text, but that "such participation never amounts to belonging" in any complete and deductive sense. That is, there will always be new details and, hence, belonging will not be reductively total. Derrida puts the point, of course, in its most paradoxically metaphysical formulation: different texts always repeat, and to repeat is always to differ. This is another rhetorical chiasmus made to look deeply metaphysical. I think it is enough to say that the notion of genre has an hermeneutical and pragmatic status and not an epistemologically foundational status.

<sup>37</sup> Although, Rorty, 1984b, locates, for his purposes, the generic mixing between "modern" philosophy and literature not with modernist ideology but primarily as a constructive bi-product of romanticism. And one could certainly argue, as Nietzschean deconstructionists omit to, that this mixing of genre and aestheticizing of philosophy is already raised to an issue in the Schillerian and Coleridgean receptions of Kant, and not an unprecedented explosion with Nietzsche.

of choosing a schema; by choosing schemas and (as the rhetorician does) putting them together, the act of choosing relative to specific purposes is foregrounded. This is at one and the same time an aesthetic model and a pragmatic model: We construct in the context of (non-foundational) genres for specific purposes; and these genres (as Dewey insisted) have histories, and historical genres are transformable. Hence, the evaluative (even knowledge-aiding) compliments we pay to them are attributions of how well (or badly) these genres are fulfilling those purposes, doing their thing. What the post-modernist has added, by borrowing and mixing historically displaced genres and styles, is that it is a worthwhile *goal* to show their metaphoricity, their *symbolic* usefulness; and by this very use (or *usure*) the point is being made that genres have no intrinsic nature or structure; that they are definable only in the pragmatic and provisional terms of when, where, why and how they are being *used*.

To put Derrida's point (note <sup>36</sup>) pragmatically, genre can be a general and/or a particular, a type and/or a token. In other words, it has no ontologically predetermined location or function. It is the provisional construction of "classes" and relationships for pragmatic/critical purposes; that is, it is yoked to a purpose not an epistemology. The energy involved in the post-modernist view of itself as genre goes *not* -- as Derrida implies it must -- into further and unavoidable concealment of itself but, rather, into wearing itself unashamedly on its sleeve. A genre can, of course, be forgotten, die or just become impotent to rouse any interest or

persuade of any point. But this is due not to its having been concealed but to its having lost its usefulness. As Jameson notes with a certain amount of Marxist momentousness, the "final moment of the generic operation, in which the working categories of genre are themselves historically deconstructed and abandoned, suggests a final axiom, according to which *all* generic categories, even the most time-hallowed and traditional, are ultimately to be understood (or "estranged") as mere ad hoc, experimental constructs, devised for a specific textual occasion and abandoned like so much scaffolding when the analysis has done its work."<sup>38</sup> Jameson's "final axiom" was the *starting* point of the rhetorician, and *is* the starting point of the pragmatic post-modern. Both Dewey and Rorty have treated the genre of philosophy as a critical invention, not anchored in "truth," in a theory of knowledge, or in transcendently "perennial problems" (*passim* Nagel's time honored Mortal Questions), but in terms of its power to offer vocabularies which are persuasive. And if a vocabulary is operative it has no reason to be defensively obsessed with its *generic identity* (*passim* Danto). On the contrary, one of the post-modern criteria of a successful work has to do with its power to distress ready made classifications. And this, I wish to propose, is one of Rorty's contributions to "philosophy."

---

<sup>38</sup> Jameson, "Magical narratives: On the Dialectical Use of Genre Criticism," in The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act, 1981:145. For a literary-historical view and theory of how genres grow, die and revive themselves for re-use, cf. A. Fowler, Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes, 1982.



Rorty's ability casually to expand the tension and relationship between clarity and artifice, between argument, historical pastiche and irony, is basic to his work's ability to persuade, to persuade us that what has been undermined is "self-foundation" not "self-assertion."<sup>39</sup> In other words, he borrows and brings together rhetorical ploys from the enlightenment, Romanticism, pragmatism, from wherever, as genres which could only be considered *inherently* incompatible on the basis of a *foundationalist* theory. This post-modern sense of accommodation and plurality is part of what empowers Rorty's rhetoric to irritate the defender of the philosophical genre: His (epistemological) nonchalance stimulates the desire to find worrying -- (e.g., the loss of objectivism) -- what he persists in not worrying about; his self-avowed provincialism stimulates the reproach that this must somehow not be enough. By substituting relative practices for legitimizing foundations, he stimulates rebuke all the more rhetorical for its inability to supply what we "can't do without" -- grounds. In effect, his making due with the "edificational" (which Danto alludes to as "unedifying violations") draws out the primarily *rhetorical* vigor of the otherwise rigorous truth-seeker. By straining the one-genre view, by pushing the model to its own self-cancellation, Rorty makes the point that, like all pragmatic inventions, a genre invites its own use and exhaustion or alteration when a new purpose, context or interest comes along (and the post-modern is one such context). The aggravation is

---

<sup>39</sup> This distinction is itself a pastiched summary of Baconian (enlightenment) and Romantic rhetoric which relativizes "self-foundation" (Descartes) but encourages "self-assertion." The terms are borrowed from Hans Blumenberg's, The Legitimation of Modernity, 1982.



stimulated by how easily he incriminates *himself* as simply a social "kibitzer" with limited use. In effect, this teasing is precisely Rorty's most powerful rhetorical ploy, an artifice to persuade us of the point that philosophy is a persuasive artifice and/or often a failed, redundant and self-absorbed genre or artifice. At the same time, his aesthetic is constructive, in the sense that he succeeds as a revisionist to the extent that the expendability of certain ways of writing is admitted, his own included. Rorty, like William, is "matching his wit," not matching the world to his epistemology.

Danto writes a different sort of drama, and its didacticism is of a different tenor: He recounts the "tragedy" (*op. cit.*, p. 80) of someone who is not able to distinguish between literature and the world; he testifies to the "nihilism" of deconstructionists against which the search for truth must be sustained by default. In effect, his own rhetoric (self-assertion) undermines his intent (the "appeal" to truth). His desire for truth is not expressed in terms of "its" propositions; and the reader does not himself, thereby, arrive at the long-awaited reward: "truth in all possible worlds." He produces a rhetorical envelope with nothing inside. And he must choose a rhetorical strategy, for what he would demonstrate he hasn't got on display. Hence, Danto dramatizes his own dilemma like the valient Cleon (of Browning's dramatic monologue), who wants us to arrive at a belief which his own rhetoric doesn't justify or embody: He doesn't practice what he preaches. Hence, it is read *ironically*; that is, it is read in a literary and rhetorical

way because of this very tension or gap. And this seems a very appropriate way to read Danto, in a way which admits these two strains Danto is under. This rather dialectical tension between Danto's rhetoric and his pleas that philosophy be something beyond rhetoric encourages one's awareness of the generic proximity of the literary and the philosophical. Danto wants philosophy to have a dualistic allegiance, to the production of a readable text for an audience, and to the production of a boundary between philosophy and textuality. Whereas the post-moderns exploit the breakdown of such a boundary as one of the enabling conditions of its revision.

But this clash of rhetorics does share a certain sort of turf: the form of the essay. Danto, in good post-modernist fashion, ironically highlights the benefits of the essay as a stylistic choice: For it is short enough to justify its rhetorical punchiness, and not long enough to demand results from the implied method of truth-finding. In effect, the essay widens the discrepancy between how he would like to be seen and how he is read. The irony is in the grandiose claim for the strivings of philosophy, inside a form (the essay) which could never be held responsible for building the desired edifice. The usefulness of the essay is its ability to frustrate, by the very artifice required to write a good one, the idea that there are building blocks for philosophical writing which are not themselves already part of the artifice and craftiness of writing.

Rorty is, of course, a self-confessed essayist in the pragmatic and pre-modernist tradition of Emerson and James. But the self-understanding of the pragmatic essayist has, again, important theoretical and practical links with the Nietzschean and modernist appeals to the essay as a form of philosophical/literary deconstruction and critique. And this alliance has been appealed to by contemporary literary theory as an important mode which links Wilde and Lukacs, Emerson, Nietzsche and Adorno, the modern and the post-modern: i.e., the essay foregrounds its own art, and its own generic limitations.<sup>40</sup> That is, the essay is a sort of shorthand which emphasizes its critical power by its smallness, its unwillingness to produce a replica of the things (or systems) it criticizes. Emerson is appealed to in this regard by Nietzsche as well as the contemporary literary theorist Harold Bloom. And the rhetorical link between them is Emerson's "mastery of prose" (Nietzsche), his choice of eloquence and self-relativizing

---

<sup>40</sup> Edward Said, in "The Text, The World, The Critic," appeals to both Wilde and Lukacs as writers, from different ideological circumstances, who argue that the critical essay is not secondary to or parasitic upon the product it treats. On the contrary, the critical essay, writes Wilde, "treats the work of art as a starting point for a new creation." (The Artist as Critic, p. 367). Lukacs has put it more cautiously, that "the essayist is a pure instance of the precursor" [(Der Essayist) ist der reine Typus des Vorläufers] (Die Seele und die Formen, p. 29). Cf. Said, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

rhetoricity over absolutes and grounds.<sup>41</sup> The essay is, in this context, less a device for professional advancement and the acquisition of tenure than a theoretical and practical criticism of the production of the "grand account." In other words, its critical power is its brevity, its ability to escape the issue of matching itself with fidelity to the details of the "fully extended system." It is a pragmatic option to *omit* rather than *represent* aspects of a tradition or a work which aren't going to be made use of. The essay has functioned in both the continental and pragmatic traditions to criticize the canon-encrusted rights of passage associated with representationalist exegesis.

The following six points (very) briefly summarize some of the connections between the modernist (Adorno), pragmatist and post-modern uses of the essay: 1. The essay emphasizes its fragmentary nature, its inability to produce (which is, therefore, a critique of) "the *total* viewpoint." ( But Adorno, unlike Emerson and Rorty, often exacerbates the production of fragments into an

---

<sup>41</sup> Emerson appears in Nietzsche's aphorism 92 in The Gay Science and 13 in Twilight of the Idols. And on the writing of Emerson, Bloom asserts with his usual inhibition: "The theoreticians of deconstruction in effect say, 'In the beginning was the trope,' rather than 'In the beginning was the troper.'" This follows Nietzsche, but . . . Emerson . . . as usual said both. Deconstructing Emerson is a course impossible, since no discourse ever has been so overtly aware of its own status as rhetoricity." (Cf. Bloom, Wallace Stevens: The Poems of Our Climate, 1977:12.) And on the deconstruction of the absoluteness of the Kantian problematic (of how to theorize the distinction between the "objective" and the "subjective"), Cavell too appeals to Emerson's rhetorical strategy: "My claim is that Emerson is out to destroy the ground on which such a problem takes itself seriously, I mean interprets itself as a metaphysical fixture . . . This no doubt implies that we do not have a universe as it is in itself. But this implication is nothing: we do not have selves in themselves either. The universe *is* what constantly and obediently answers to our conceptions. It is what *can* be all the ways we know it to be, which is to say, all the ways we can be." (Cavell, 1982:264.)

elitist and ideological device for the defensive subject expressing his [Adorno's] own cognitive/aesthetic utopia.)<sup>42</sup> 2. It seems especially suitable for periods when paradigms are unsettled, understanding is partial and the reconstitution of the traditional argumentative "Aufbau" appears unmanageable. 3. The essay cannot promise too much; and it, therefore, tolerates a high degree of incompleteness. It hasn't time to propose a new "conceptual key" or metadiscourse which would require a more laborious initiation cite. 4. It presents, then, rather than first principles or foundational atoms, "partisan" (Rorty) "complexes" (Adorno) which are somewhere between logically sequential arguments and allegorical fairytales for a critical purpose. 5. By avoiding reproducing what it examines, it can foster conditions under which "the object" can be viewed differently. 6. By abjuring epistemological beginnings and/or argumentative exhaustiveness, it starts in the middle (Recall Fish, p. 151.) where intrusions are most pointed and less superfluously long winded and/or given to the sort of epistemological dispute which seeks to avoid the *social* conflicts arising in this "middle."<sup>43</sup>

Although irony is a concept shared by the modernist and post-modernist essay, the post-modern's irony is less crisis-ridden and melancholich. (It is this good humor which Nietzsche appreciated about Emerson and which Adorno did not appreciate about

---

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Adorno's "Der Essay als Form," 1958.

<sup>43</sup> For a thorough treatment of Adorno's theory of the essay and its relation to Nietzsche and Lukacs, cf. Gillian Rose, The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno, 1978.



Nietzsche's critique of enlightenment reason.)<sup>44</sup> For Rorty, what presents the conditions of knowledge so well as the irony of communities out looking to transcend themselves? It (irony) exploits the curious relations between "finding" truths and making texts, between the different contexts and genres of literature, science, history, politics and philosophy appealed to when carving out their disciplinary space, when writing within relations which are unstable, involving conflicts, infighting and competitions which impinge on (and help produce) the variety of our communications. Irony self-consciously conveys epistemological limitation; it recognizes the interplay between truths and the social motivations which negotiate their institutional courses. Irony foregrounds rhetorical devices which thereby restrict the author himself from assuming definitive linguistic and conceptual authority over the domain in question. It problematizes the language dominant in a discourse by the juxtapositions and conflicts it enjoins.

Of course the modalities of irony are many and diffuse: juxtaposition of words, of narrative voices, of genres themselves. For Rorty, one method is rubbing up caricatures of time-honored systems against pithy essays, of treating the system's failure as a "comfort" and the traditional comforts sought in a foundationalist's theory of knowledge as unsupplied and contingent on other more

---

<sup>44</sup> In other words, Adorno's and Horkheimer's critique in Dialectic of Enlightenment recalls Nietzsche's in the context of a very humorless book. Whereas, Adorno's sense of irony comes across very strongly in his more aphoristic and essayistic work, Minima Moralia. But, again, it is an anxiety-ridden and modernist irony which Adorno makes most effective.

precarious social circumstances. His irony is couched not in terms of the stylistic contrasts between narrative speakers, as in Plato's, Kierkegaard's and Hume's dialogues; it is produced by casually rubbing genres together: talking philosophy as literature, talking straight and talking satire, using the modality of argument and couching it in a deflationary "form of conversation." Those critics who constantly and blandly chant "We surely need more than conversation" mean much less by the word than Rorty, who allows all the strategies of philosophy to wander into a democratized form of conversation, making their appearance not as truth but as rhetoric. Rorty's oxymoronic "post-Philosophical philosopher" is a social "kibitzer" (an *oral* rather than a textual metaphorical intruder) who knows that "representation" is no more important or effective than his oral ability to "gossip convincingly and appropriately," to handle committee meetings, to be brief, public and useful (like the essay).

So, to view the genre of the philosophical essay as something which doesn't outrun its aesthetic in order to represent the truth is to say that, whatever language and/or style is *used* to do the "representing," it will function in such a way only insofar as the language games which got the genre off the ground have become thoroughly conventional and assimilated. As Northrop Frye writes in Anatomy of Criticism: "An original painter knows . . . that when the public demands likeness to an object, it generally wants . . . likeness to the pictorial conventions it is familiar with."<sup>45</sup> And

---

<sup>45</sup> Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays, 1957:132.

this is Rorty's point too: It is the familiar which establishes the "given;" verisimilitude is achieved (*contra* Danto) in terms of a text's correspondence to generic conventions. Choosing to couch philosophical disputes and changes in idiom in relativistically aesthetic and literary terms rather than "scientific" terms of approaching "truth," is to say that once some dissenter is driven up against a wall of argument (or apologetics) for the truth, "the wall against which he is driven will come to be seen as just one more vocabulary, one more way of describing things. The wall then turns out to be a painted backdrop, one more work of man, one more bit of cultural stage-setting."<sup>46</sup> And it is this which the post-modernists celebrate. They are no longer longing for the literal elimination of metaphor: They accept and exploit the topological or symbolic nature of their constructs; and they take pleasure in the versatility this engenders, in the possibility of continuously reconstituting our traditions for present purposes.

While the failure of philosophy to "see" the truth rather than its own metaphors of vision is, to Rorty an instructive irony, it is, to

---

<sup>46</sup> Rorty, "The Contingency of Community," 1986. As has already been said, that Danto the aesthete has argued so persuasively against imitational theories of art, it is all the more curious that his essayistic apology for the genre of philosophy would smack of the imitational hope that there is something "outside" (e.g., the necessary and true) for philosophical constructions to "approach." This is not to say that there is no "intellectual progress" to be got from the "literalization of selected metaphors" (Rorty, *Ibid.*) which become "technical facts" (Danto, cf. p. 261); it is to say (if I follow Rorty here) that progress for a community or a genre is a question of criticizing old words and perhaps using new words, but that the appeal to notions like "truth," "argument," "foundation" and "reference" are badly suited and counterproductive notions for describing the transition, or change, or relation between the old, the critical and/or the new, between the metaphor, the fact, and its eventual deconstruction back into a polyvocal metaphor.

Danto, the stimulus to keep the quest, the impossible dream, alive and kicking. And in this sense, Rorty's democratic apologetics for a pragmatic rhetoricity "is more like returning to a house (Isocrates' and James') than like propping it up or placing barricades around it."<sup>47</sup> The post-modernist aesthetic critique of Danto-like philosophizing is, like James' of copying (p. 114, n. 44) and Gombrich's of literal representation, that increasing the power of a genre is accomplished not by creating and copying univocal facts with increased fastidiousness, for all possible worlds; it is accomplished by transfiguring, suggesting and altering with increasing persuasiveness, subtlety, plurality and concreteness. When the sensational conflict between phenomena and noumena, between those who embrace the contingent and those who chase eternity, between those who write hymns, or parodies, or in some other genre, is not handled as a dispute between "nihilists" and "truth-seekers," then it might be argued that it is precisely this generic flexibility which has been the "basis" of philosophy's (or philosophies') persuasive staying power; and that its ability to try new partners, like literary theory, is one more aid in this effort.

So, one can summarize the consequences of a post-modern reading (or "deconstruction") of Danto's rhetoric with the following four points: 1. Danto is persuasive precisely when his prose does not conform perfectly to his prescriptions, when he reiterates generic rhetoric without supplying the univocal "facts" which would vindicate his hopes. 2. Thereby, his own activity helps

---

<sup>47</sup> Rorty, *Ibid.*

undermine the illusion of being able to distinguish in a stabilized and principled way between artifice and truth. 3. One might, then, add that the tropological and affective power Danto wishes the philosophical text to have (for reasons of communicating well with *readers*) is always already part of its ability to communicate at all, and not a stylistic afterthought, or a dubious and threatening form of equivocation to be controlled with a theory of truth. 4. It is this conclusion to Danto's apologetics (that the genre of philosophy, or any genre for that matter, has no "intrinsic" dynamic or constitution) which is the premise of the post-modern use of genre (Recall Copland.): Genres are conventional and pragmatic habits which become increasingly useful and communicative when treated non-hierarchically and pluralistically, when offering a larger repertoire of speakers in the context of a single work. Genres are then treated (as I think Rorty treats them) as provisional, ad hoc laminations of styles and interests, rising and falling in specific circumstances.

A post-modern aesthetic operates as an acceptance of Einstein's relativization of time and the deconstruction of linear, progressivist and polemically structured modernism. Its products make several times and styles contemporaneous, specific constellations brought together for specific moments and places. Its reunions with tradition are utilitarian, not determinatively monolithic or linear (or "ruptured"). Post-modern products, and their appeal to ironic relationships, are able (again, like Rorty in philosophy) to generate more sympathy with our failures (and the



provisionality of our rhetorical alliances) because they are not "deep." Rorty casts our philosophical failures as a comedy of manners, as sets of family quarrels, as the continuous revision (not of the grounds of knowledge, but) of practice and discourses for evaluative and pragmatic reasons. The irony is enhanced by his willingness to define himself fully in terms of textual and rhetorical traditions and practices which are still useful (perhaps even more useful) when deprived of their foundations.<sup>48</sup> What aligns the pragmatist not just with traditional liberalism but also with the post-modern is the view that when they are criticized, it is not because someone has compared them to the truth, but because they have failed to match up to pre-established ideologies and conventions of genre. But in attempting to succeed, the post-modern, too, is a reworking of classical rhetoric, the bringing together of styles and their conflicts without an underlying epistemological polemic to keep them separated and prevent their cohabitation for some purpose. They acknowledge, like Gorgias, that their symbols are brought together as self-acknowledged and pragmatic tropes.

---

<sup>48</sup> Because Rorty aligns himself with pre-socratic rhetoric, Baconian pragmatics of "reason" and 18<sup>th</sup>-century liberal politics, he takes issue with the modernist all-or-nothing critique of tradition, and especially with the Horkheimer/Adorno critique of enlightenment reason: "Horkheimer and Adorno assumed that the terms in which those who begin a historical development describe their enterprise are the terms which describe it correctly, and then inferred that a repudiation of that terminology deprives the results of the development of a right to exist." Rorty, "The Contingency of Community," *Ibid.*

## 6.8 IN-CONCLUSIVE: CAUGHT IN THE ART OF PHILOSOPHIZING:

In the language of Philosophy Gorgias had seen persuasive powers, the not entirely pragmatic Peirce had seen icons, Eco a labyrinth of signs, Dewey social artifacts, Derrida erased metaphors, Foucault power discourses, and Rorty rhetorical narratives; thereby making Philosophy a semiotic system of figures through which it has constructed a means of access to its world (e.g., "objects") and reflexively to itself (the "subject"), with a "network of interpretants" holding it all together. The pragmatist's rather nonchalant after-thought is that some of our most basic figures (the onto-epistemologically representative itself) are used up, that we still have an old effigy which occasionally lingers on, dislocated from its cultural sources (Graeco-Christian), having had long enough to "demonstrate" its picture of itself and the picture's use.

The pragmatist (like Nietzsche) sees the analogy between language (sign) and something other than itself (the signified) as being, when given content, an elliptical summary of social interests, mediating the relation of sign and signified, of metaphor and its literal uses. Recall Nietzsche from p. 10, n. 5:

"What then is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which became poetically and rhetorically intensified, metamorphosed, adorned, and after long usage, seem to a nation fixed, canonic and binding; truths are illusions of which one had forgotten that they *are* illusions; worn out metaphors which have become powerless to affect the *senses* (die abgenützt und sinnlich kraftlos geworden

sind), coins which have their obverse (Bild) effaced and now are no longer of account as coins but merely as metal."

The difference between the contemporary Nietzschean and pragmatic arts of philosophizing is that continental criticism (e.g., of Foucault) is itself dominated by the negative social metaphors of domination, power, *misuse*, and suppression. The post-modern pragmatist is less high-pitched, less covertly Romantic, and more positively ambivalent. If what we do is construct figures and images to get things done, make things true, and form big pictures anyway, then there is no given that says it cannot on occasion be done well and for good social reasons, done artfully as well as powerfully. The sociable pragmatist sees philosophical imagery functioning not only to exclude and efface but also to include and enhance, not only to recapitulate a "dominant metaphors" but to change them or drop them depending on the occasion. Truth is not only a social act of excluding the "false" and "irrational," an effort of the "civilized" to use the language of "Truth" and "Reason" to protect themselves from (and marginalize) the "mad," to make discourse synonymous with repression (Foucault's analysis).<sup>49</sup> There is also a potentially positive interplay between the constructed figure, the rhetorics of truths and goodness, and our socio-personal experience. (This is the constructive side of Dewey's theory of aesthetic experience.) If, while producing philosophical figures (e.g., of "rationality"), fact and value talk are

---

<sup>49</sup> Foucault, Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason, trans. R. Howard, (based on the pocket edition), 1965. Foucault, of course, amended this one sidedness (that all is ill), not with the ambivalent glee of Nietzsche, but with a sense that there is positive power and healthy resistance. Cf., Power/Knowledge, (ed.) C. Gordon, 1980.

integrated, part of a fluid social exchange, inverting each other without either having final autonomous, hierarchical priority, then the critical exercise is not merely deconstructive but reconstructive too. (After all we need a straight man for our (phallo-critical) ridicule [*passim* Derrida]). If philosophy is not to be centered universally around an erased metaphysics of knowledge (epistemology), governed by the brute and simple (imagery of "fact"), then it must be pursued artfully within different particular networks of cultural work where figures and narratives are constructed to do certain (particular) jobs, and hopefully to do them well.

Philosophy is a medium through which things get produced. And the pragmatist would mean by the socio-artistic metaphor of "production" that philosophy is positively caught in the art of abetting and/or criticizing these narrative systems in terms of the social experience out of which they accrue and also to the edification of which they can contribute. (This is the evaluative/educative thrust of Dewey's aesthetic (reminiscent of Schiller),<sup>50</sup> and the matrix within which he assessed such things as the more "ideally" intended imagery of humanist ethics and political metaphysics.

But whatever the literary art or genre, the pragmatist critic wants to be able to drop different sorts of names, and do different sorts of criticism, hoping it is possible to "read" different artifacts and

---

<sup>50</sup> Cf., F. Schiller, On the Aesthetic Education of Man, Wilkinson & Willoughby (eds., transl., Intro., Commentary, & Glossary of terms), 1982.

texts being produced in different places in contemporary culture, (which neither start from nor work toward the "Universal" but from and toward the rhetorical and pluralistic). He sees his thematic taken up after Dewey by a motley of allies; in e.g., the philosophy of science (when they drop any ahistorical, objectivist pretence and recall that they are talking with the rest of culture and its conflicts -- as do Feyerabend and Kuhn). He has allies too in anthropology, when the totalizing hope of "finding" *the* structural discourse of either the "inner" universal mind (Levi-Strauss) or culture's hidden universal "objects," e.g., "class" and "contradiction" (Godelier), is dropped, and when decentralized and critical "research strategies" and "narrative strategies" are taken up instead (M. Harris, C. Geertz, J. Clifford and G. E. Marcus).<sup>51</sup> He wants to converse also with Hermeneuticists when their favorite texts (e.g., Gadamer's Aristotle) do not make it a virtue to transcend all over again (cf., Margolis).<sup>52</sup> And he has friends doing philosophical aesthetics and literary criticism when their sometimes self-deprecating bow before honored texts and "eternal" problems becomes an attempt to use interpretative constructs to enhance and expand text reading and making (e.g., Fish, Culler). What James called "pluralism" and Dewey called "art and aesthetic experience," and what both summarized as "pragmatism," is a dis-position to draw together similar and

<sup>51</sup> Cf., especially M. Harris, *op. cit.*, and Clifford and Marcus (eds.) Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography, 1984, for the ways in which some anthropologists have used deconstruction, contemporary literary theory and questions of a rhetorical cast to criticize and reorient their discipline's epistemological narratives.

<sup>52</sup> Cf., J. Margolis' "Pragmatism Without Foundations", Amer. Phil. Quarterly, Jan. 1984, on the lingering transcendental in "Hermeneutic culture critics" like Gadamer, Habermas and Apel.



different experiences, rhetorics and interpretations in the context of socio-personal criticism.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Abrams, M. H.  
 1953 The Mirror and the Lamp, London: Oxford Univ. Press.  
 1977 "The Deconstructive Angel", Critical Inquiry, Spring.
- Adorno, Theodor W.  
 1958 "Der Essay als Form," Noten zur Literatur I, Frankfurt.  
 1970 Ästhetische Theorie (Aesthetic Theory), Frankfurt: Surkamp.  
 1975 Philosophie der neuen Musik (Philosophy of Modern Music), Frankfurt: Surkamp.  
 1980 Minima Moralia, Frankfurt: Surkamp.  
 1981 Dialektik der Aufklärung (Dialectic of Enlightenment), Frankfurt: Surkamp.
- Apel, Karl-Otto  
 1980 Towards a Transformation of Philosophy, London: R.&K. Paul.
- Aristotle  
 1958 On Poetry and Style, (ed. & transl.) G. M. A. Grube, N.Y.: Bobbs-Merrill.  
 1960 The Works of Aristotle, (ed.) W.D. Ross, (trans.) W.R. Roberts, Oxford: Clarendon.
- Auerbach, Erich  
 1953 Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature, (1974) Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press.
- Augé, Marc  
 1982 The Anthropological Circle, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Bacon, Francis  
 1968 The Advancement of Learning, in The Works of Francis Bacon, (eds.) J. Spedding, R. L. Ellis, D. D. Heath, N. Y.: Garrett.
- Baldwin, T. W.  
 1944 William Shakespere's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke, 2 vols., Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press.
- Barth, John  
 1967 "The Literature of Exhaustion", The Atlantic  
 1980 "The Literature of Replenishment, Postmodern Fiction" The Atlantic.
- Barthes, Roland  
 1971 "Style and Image", Literary Style: A Symposium, (ed.), Chatman, S., Oxford.  
 1979 "From Work to Text", in Textual Strategies, (ed.) Harari, J.V.

- 1982 Barthes: Selected Writings, (ed. & intro.: Susan Sontag), London: Cape.
- Beardsley, M. C.  
 1966 Aesthetics From Classical Greece to the Present, N. Y.: Macmillan  
 1970 The Possibility of Criticism, Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press.  
 1982 The Aesthetic Point of View, (eds.) Wreen and Callen, Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press.
- Berger, A.  
 1953 Aaron Copland, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Bernstein, Richard  
 1971 Praxis and Action, Philadelphia: Univ. of Penn. Press.  
 1983 Beyond Objectivism and Relativism, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Blair, Hugh  
 1965 Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, 2 Vol., (ed.) H. F. Harding, Carbondale: S. Illinois Univ. Press.
- Bloom, Harold  
 1975 "The Necessity of Misreading", The Georgia Rev.: No. 2.  
 1977 Wallace Stevens: The Poems of Our Climate, Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press.  
 1980 A Map of Misreading, London: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Borges, Jorge Luis  
 1970 Labyrinths, (eds.) Yates & Irby, Middlesex: Penguin.
- Bradbury, Malcolm and Mcfarlane, James  
 1976 Modernism, (eds.), Middlesex: Penguin.
- Brown, Peter  
 1969 Augustine of Hippo: A Biography, Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press.
- Budd, Malcolm  
 1985 Music and the Emotions, London: RKP.
- Bullough, Edward  
 1957 Aesthetics: Lectures and Essays, (ed.) E. Wilkinson, London.
- Bultmann, Rudolf  
 1910 Der Stil der Paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck.
- Campbell, J.  
 1984 "Rorty's Use of Dewey", Southern J. of Philosophy, xxii/2:175-187.
- Cavell, Stanley  
 1979 The World Viewed, Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press.  
 1982 "Thinking of Emerson," in Essays in Kant's Aesthetics,

- (eds.) T. Cohen, P. Guyer, Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press.
- Chatman, S. (ed.)  
 1971 Literary Style: A Symposium, Oxford Univ. Press.
- Chomsky, N.  
 1957 Syntactic Structures, The Hague: Mouton.  
 1972 Rules and Representations, London: New Left Books.
- Cicero, Marcus Tullius  
 ——— De Inventione, with English trans. & intro. by H. M. Hubbell, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1942.  
 ——— Brutus, with English trans. & intro. by G. L. Hendrickson, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1942.  
 ——— Orator, with English trans. & intro. by H. M. Hubbell, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1942.  
 1951 The Basic Works of Cicero, (ed.) M. Hadas, N.Y.: Modern Library.  
 1964 The Thought of Cicero: Philosophical Selections, (ed.) S. J. Wilson, London: G. Bell.
- Clifford, J. & Marcus, G. E. (eds.)  
 1986 Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography, Berkeley: Calif. Univ. Press.
- Collingwood, R. G.  
 1938 The Principles of Art, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Copland, Aaron  
 1941 Our New Music, N.Y. : McGraw-Hill.  
 1968 The New Music 1900-1960, N.Y.: Norton.
- Croce, Benedetto  
 1922 Aesthetics, 2nd ed., trans. Ainslee, London: Macmillan.
- Culler, Jonathan  
 1975 Structuralist Poetics, London: RKP.  
 1982 On Deconstruction, Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press.
- Danto, A. C.  
 1981 The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art  
 1985 "Philosophy as/and/of Literature", in Post-analytic Philosophy, Rajchman, J. & West, C. (eds.), N.Y: Columbia Univ. Pr.,
- Davidson, Donald  
 1973 "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme", APA Address.
- Davidson, Hugh M.  
 1965 Audience, Words, and Art: Studies in 17th Century

- French Rhetoric, Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press.
- de Man, Paul
- 1979 Allegories of Reading, New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.
- 1984 The Rhetoric of Romaniticism, N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press.
- 1986 The Resistance to Theory, Minneapolis: Univ. Minn. Press.
- Derrida, Jauques
- 1976 Of Grammatology, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.
- 1978 Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles, Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press.
- 1980 "La Loi du genre/The Law of Genre," GLYPH, 7:176-232.
- 1981a Writing and Difference, Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press.
- 1981b Positions, Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press.
- 1982 Margins of Philosophy, Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press.
- Dewey, John
- 1910 The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy: And Other Essays in Contemporary Thought.
- 1916 Democracy and Education, (1966 edition).
- 1920 Reconstruction in Philosophy, (enlarged 1948).
- 1927 "'Half-Hearted Naturalism'," Journal of Philosophy, 24.
- 1929a The Quest for Certainty.
- 1929b Experience and Nature, (Dover Edition: 1958)
- 1929c Characters and Events: Popular Essays in Social and Political Philosophy
- 1929d Individualism Old and New
- 1930 "From Absolutism to Experimentalism", Contemporary American Philosophers, (eds.) Adams & Montague.
- 1934a Art as Experience
- 1934b A Common Faith
- 1935 Liberalism and Social Action
- 1938 Logic: The Theory of Inquiry,
- Dickie, George
- 1974 Art and the Aesthetic, Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press.
- Dummett, Michael
- 1978 Truth and Other Enigmas, Cambridge: Harv. Univ. Press.
- Eagleton, Terry
- 1976 Marxism and Literary Criticism, London: Methuen.
- 1981 Walter Benjamin or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism, London: Verso.
- Eco, Umberto,
- 1976 A Theory of Semiotics, Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press.
- 1979 The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts, Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press.
- 1984 The Name of the Rose, London: Picador.
- 1985a "Producing Signs," in On Signs (ed.) M. Blonsky, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press.



- 1985b Reflections on *The Name of the Rose*, London: Secker & Warburg.
- Emerson, R.W.  
1906 Essays, London: Dent.
- Erikson, Keith V.  
1974 Aristotle: The Classical Heritage of Rhetoric, (ed.), N.J.: Scarecrow.
- Feyerabend, Paul  
1978 Against Method, London: Verso.
- Fish, Stanley  
1980 Is there a Text in this Class?, Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press.  
1982 "With Compliments of the Author: Reflections on Austin and Derrida," Critical Inquiry, Summer:693-721.  
1984 "Change," Tamkang Rev., 14:277-296.  
1985 "Consequences", Critical Inquiry, March.
- Foucault, Michel  
1965 Madness and Civilization, A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason, trans. R. Howard, (based on the pocket edition).  
1972 Histoire de la folie, Paris: Gallimard.  
1980 Power/Knowledge, (ed.) C. Gordon, Brighton: Harvester.
- Fowler, A.  
1982 Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes, Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Frampton, Kenneth  
1983 "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance," in The Anti-Aesthetic, (ed.) Hal Foster, Port Townsend: Bay Press.
- Frye, Northrop  
1957 Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press.
- Fumaroli, Marc  
1983 "Rhetoric, Politics, and Society: From Italian Ciceronianism to French Classicism," in J. J. Murphy, (ed.) Renaissance Eloquence, Berkeley: Univ. Calif. Press.
- Galtung, Johan  
1981 "Structure, Culture, and Intellectual Style: An Essay Comparing Saxon, Teutonic, Gallic and Nipponic Approaches", Soc.Science Infor., 20(6): 817-856, London: SAGE.
- Gardner, John  
1978 On Moral Fiction, N.Y.: Basic Books.
- Geertz, Clifford

- 1973 The Interpretation of Cultures, N.Y.: Basic Books.
- Gombrich, E.H.  
 1960 Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press.
- Goodman, Nelson  
 1955 Fact, Fiction and Forecast, Cambridge, Mass..  
 1969 Languages of Art, N.Y.: Bobbs-Merrill.  
 1975 "The Status of Style," Critical Inquiry, June:799-811.  
 1978 Ways of Worldmaking, N.Y.: Hackett.  
 1982 "Implementation of the Arts," J. Aesthetics and Art Crit., Spring:281-283.  
 1985 "How Buildings Mean", Critical Inquiry, June (11).
- Goudge, T. A.  
 1950 The Thought of C. S. Peirce, Toronto: Toronto Univ. Press.
- Graff, Gerald  
 1979 "The Myth of the Postmodern Breakthrough," in Literature Against Itself, pp. 31-62.
- Grass, G.  
 1963 Hundejahre (Dog Years), , trans. Manheim 1981.
- Guthrie, W. K. C.  
 1971 The Sophists, Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Guyer, P.  
 1982 Essays in Kant's Aesthetics, (ed) with T. Cohen, Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press.
- Habermas, Jürgen  
 1982a Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns (Theory of Communicative Action), Frankfurt: Surkamp.  
 1982b "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Re-Reading *Dialectic of Enlightenment*," New German Critique, Summer:13-30.
- Hacking, Ian  
 1985 "Styles of Scientific Reasoning", in Post-Analytic Philosophy, Rajchman & West (eds.), N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press.
- Hadas, M.  
 1951 The Basic Works of Cicero, (ed.) N.Y.: The Modern Library  
 1962 A History of Latin Literature, N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press.
- Harari, J.V.  
 1979 Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism, (ed. and intro.), Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press.
- Harris, Marvin  
 1980 Cultural Materialism: The Struggle for a Science of Culture, N.Y.: Vintage.
- Hegel, G.W.F.  
 1977 Ästhetik I/II, (ed. & intro.) R. Bubner, Stuttgart: Reclam.

- Heidegger, M.  
 1957 Der Satz vom Grund, Pfullingen.  
 1975 Poetry, Language, Thought, (trans. & intro.) A. H. Hofstadter, N.Y.: Harper & Row.
- Hepburn, R.W.  
 1968 Christianity and Paradox, N.Y.: Pegasus.  
 1984 Wonder: and Other Essays, Edinburgh: Edinb. Univ. Press.
- Herbert, Robert L.  
 1964 Modern Artists On Art, (ed.), New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Hirsch, E.D.Jr.  
 1967 Validity in Interpretation, New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.  
 1976 The Aims of Interpretation, Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press.
- Holoman & Palisca  
 1982 Musicology in the 1980's, N.Y.: Da Capo Press.
- Hookway, Christopher  
 1985 Peirce, London: RKP.
- Hume, David  
 1964 Philosophical Works, III: Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary. (eds.) Green & Grose, Aalen: Scientia Verlag.
- Huyssen, Andreas  
 1984 "Mapping the Postmodern," New German Critique, 33:5-52.
- James, William  
 1897 The Will to Believe, (1956 Dover edition).  
 1902 The Varieties of Religious Experience  
 1907 Pragmatism, (1981a, Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press).  
 1909a The Meaning of Truth, (1981b, Cambr.: Harv. Univ. Press).  
 1909b A Pluralistic Universe, N.Y.: Longmans.  
 1911 Memoirs and Studies, N.Y.: Longmans.  
 1920 Collected Essays and Reviews, N.Y.: Longmans.
- Jameson, F.  
 1972 The Prison House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism, Princeton Univ. Press.  
 1975 "Magical Narratives: Romance as Genre," New Lit. Hist. 7.  
 1981 The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act, Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press.
- Jay, Martin  
 1984 Adorno, London: Fontana.
- Jencks, Charles  
 1984 The Language of Post-modern Architecture, London: Academy.  
 1986 What is Post-Modernism?, London: Academy.

- Jakobson, R.  
 1968 "Poetry of Grammar and grammar of poetry," Lingua 21:597-609.  
 1970 (with Lawrence Jones) Shakespeare's Verbal Art in 'Th'Expende of Spirit', The Hague: Mouton.
- Kennedy, G. A.  
 1963 The Art of Persuasion in Greece, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press.  
 1972 The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press.  
 1980 Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times, Univ. of N.C. Press.
- Kerman, Joseph  
 1985 Musicology, London: Fontana.
- Kierkegaard, S.  
 1974 Concluding Unscientific Postscript, Princeton Univ. Press.
- Krell, D. F.  
 1986 Intimations of Mortality: Time, Truth, and Finitude in Heidegger's Thinking of Being, Penn. St. Univ. Press.
- Kripke, Saul  
 1972 "Naming and Necessity", Semantics of Natural Language, (eds.) Davidson & Harman, Dordrecht.
- Kristeva, Julia  
 1980 Desire in Language: A Semiotic approach to Literature and Art, N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press.
- Kuhn, Thomas S.  
 1970 The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press.  
 1985 "Mathematical Versus Experimental Traditions in the Development of Physical Science", in Post-Analytic Philosophy, Rajchman & West (eds.), N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press.
- Kuklick, Bruce  
 1977 The Rise of American Philosophy, New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.
- Lauden, L.  
 1981 Science and Hypothesis, Dordrecht: Reidel.
- Lecerle, Jean-Jacques  
 1985 Philosophy through the Looking-Glass: Language, Nonsense, Desire, London: Hutchinson.
- Lévi-Strauss, C.  
 1966 The Savage Mind, Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press.  
 1969 The Raw and the Cooked, N.Y.: Harper and Row.
- Locke, John

- 1979 An Essay concerning Human Understanding, (ed. & intro.) P. H. Nidditch, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Lockwood, D. P.  
1971 A Survey of Classical Roman Literature, Vol. I, Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press.
- Lyotard, Jean-François  
1984 The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press (in French: 1979.).
- MacIntyre, Alasdair  
1981 After Virtue, London: Duckworth.
- MacKendrick, P. and Howe, H. M.  
1975 Classics in Translation, Vol. II, (eds.), Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press.
- Maniates, Maria Rika  
1982 "Applications of the History of Ideas," in Musicology in the 1980's, (eds) Holosman, Palisca, pp. 39-51.  
1982 "Music and Rhetoric: Faces of Cultural History in the Renaissance and the Baroque," Israel Studies in Musicology 3.
- Margolis, Joseph  
1976 "Robust Relativism," Journal of Aesth. & Art Criticism, XXXV:37-46.  
1980 Art and Philosophy, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press.  
1981 "The Autographic Nature of Dance," J. Aesthetics and Art Crit., Summer:419-427.  
1983 "Deconstruction; or The Mystery of the Mystery of the Text," Rivista di estetica, xxxiii.  
1984 "Pragmatism Without Foundations", Amer. Phil. Quarterly, Jan.  
1985 "Prospects Regarding the Science of Criticism," British J. of Aesthetics, vol. 25:125-134.  
1986 Pragmatism Without Foundations: Reconciling Realism and Relativism, London: Blackwell.  
\_\_\_\_ "The Semiotics of Music," (Unpublished).
- McDermott, J. J. (ed.)  
1981 The Philosophy of John Dewey 2 vols., Chicago Univ. Press.
- Megill, A.  
1985 Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida, Berkeley: Calif. Univ. Press.
- Mothersill, Mary  
1984 Beauty Restored, London: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Murdoch, Iris  
1978 The Fire and the Sun: Why Plato Banished the Artists,



- Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Murphy, James J.  
 1978 Medieval Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Medieval Rhetoric, Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press.  
 1982 The Rhetorical Tradition and Modern Writing, (ed.), N.Y.: Modern Language Association.  
 1983 Renaissance Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric, (ed.), Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.
- Nagel, Thomas  
 1979 Mortal Questions, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Nehamas, Alexander  
 1985 Nietzsche: Life as Literature, Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Newman, Charles  
 1985 The Post-Modern Aura: The Act of Fiction in an Age of Inflation, Evanston: Northw. Univ. Press.
- Nietzsche, F.  
 1980 Werke, Hanser (ed.), Band I-V.
- Norris, C.  
 1983 The Deconstructive Turn: Essays in the Rhetoric of Philosophy, London.
- Nussbaum, Martha C.  
 1986 The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy, Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Ohmann, R.  
 1971 "Speech Acts and the Definition of Literature," Philosophy and Rhetoric, IV.
- Osborne, Harold  
 1955 Aesthetics and Criticism, London: R.K.P.  
 1970 The Art of Appreciation, London: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Peirce, Charles Sanders  
 1933-58 Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, (eds.) Hartshorne, Weiss, Burks, Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Perry, R. B.  
 1935 The Thought and Character of William James, Boston: Little, Brown and Co..
- Plato  
 1973 Phaedrus, (trans. & intro.) W. Hamilton, N.Y.: Penguin.  
 1985 Gorgias, (trans. & intro.) W. Hamilton, N.Y.: Penguin.  
 1986 Protagoras and Meno, (trans. & intro.) W. K. C. Guthrie, N.Y.: Penguin.
- Pratt, M. L.

- 1977 Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse,  
Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press.
- Putnam, Hilary  
1981 Reason, Truth and History, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ.  
Press.
- Quine, W.vO.  
1963 From a Logical Point of View, N.Y.: Harper & Row.  
1969 Ontological Relativity and Other Essays, N.Y.: Columbia  
Univ. Press.  
1978 The Web of Belief, (with S. S. Ullian), N.Y.
- Quintilian  
1965 Institutiones oratoriae: Bk. I and II, (trans.) J. S. Watson,  
(ed.) J. J. Murphy, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.  
1974 Quintilian as Educator: Selections from Institutio oratoria  
of Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, (trans.) H. E. Butler, (ed.) F.  
M. Wheelock, N.Y.: Twayne.
- Ratner, J.  
1957 Characters and Events: Popular Essays in Social and  
Political Philosophy, N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Ratner, S., Altman, J., Wheeler, J.E., (eds.)  
1964 John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley, A Philosophical  
Correspondence -- 1932-1951, New Brunswick: Rutgers  
Univ. Press.
- Riddel, Joseph  
1979 "Decentering the Image: The 'Project' of 'American'  
Poetics?", in Textual Strategies, ed. Harari, J.V..
- Rorty, Amélie Oksenberg  
1983 "Experiments in Philosophic Genre: Descartes'  
*Meditations*," Critical Inquiry 9: 545-564.
- Rorty, Richard  
1961 "Pragmatism, Categories and Language", Phil. Review, vol.  
69:197-223.  
1976 "Keeping Philosophy Pure: An Essay on Wittgenstein,"  
The Yale Review, LXV:336-356.  
1979 Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, Princeton:  
Princeton Univ. Press.  
1982 Consequences of Pragmatism, Minneapolis: Univ. of Minn.  
Press  
1984a "Philosophy Without Principles", Critical Inquiry, March.  
1984b "Deconstruction and Circumvention", Critical Inquiry,  
September.  
1984c "The Historiography of Philosophy: Four Genres," in  
Philosophy in History, (eds.) Rorty, Schneewind and  
Skinner, Cambridge.

- 1984d "Habermas and Lyotard on Postmodernity," in Habermas and Modernity, (ed.) Richard Bernstein, pp.161-175.
- 1985 "Solidarity or Objectivity?", in Post-analytic Philosophy, (eds.) Rajchman & West.
- 1986 "The Contingency of Community," London Rev. of Books, July, 24.
- "Texts and Lumps," (Unpublished)
- Rose, Gillian
- 1978 The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno, New York.
- Rosen, Charles
- 1977 "The Ruins of Walter Benjamin," N.Y. Rev. of Books, 24.
- 1981 Arnold Schoenberg, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press.
- Rosmarin, Adena
- 1985 The Power of Genre, Minneapolis: Univ. of Minn. Press.
- Roth, R. J.
- 1962 John Dewey and Self-Realization, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Royce, Josiah
- 1885 The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- 1908 The Philosophy of Loyalty, N.Y.: Macmillan.
- Said, Edward
- 1976 "Interview with Edward Said", Diacritics, 6:3,41.
- 1979 "The Text, the World, the Critic" in Textual Strategies (ed.) Harari, 161-188.
- Saussure, Ferdinand de
- 1974 Course in General Linguistics, trans. Peter Owen, London: Fontana.
- Schiller, Friedrich
- 1982 Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen/On the Aesthetic Education of Man, (eds., trans., & intro.) E.M. Wilkinson, L.A. Willoughby, London: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Schilpp, P. A. (ed.)
- 1939 The Philosophy of John Dewey, Chicago: Tudor.
- Schmitz, R. M.
- 1948 Hugh Blair, N. Y.: King's Crown Press.
- Scholes, R.
- 1974 Structuralism in Literature: An Introduction, New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.
- Searle, John
- 1969 Speech Acts, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- 1974 "The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse", New Lit. Hist. V.

- Skagestad, P.  
 1981 The Road of Inquiry, N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press.
- Sontag, Susan  
 1979 On Photography, Middlesex: Penguin.
- Sparshott, Francis  
 1982 The Theory of the Arts, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press.
- Subotnik, R. R.  
 1982 "Musicology and Criticism," Musicology in the 1980's,  
 (eds.) Holoman, Palisca, N.Y.: Da Capo Press.
- Toulmin, Stephen  
 1982 "The Construal of Reality: Criticism in Modern and Post-  
 modern Science", Critical Inquiry, September (9).
- Trilling, Lionel  
 1966 Beyond Culture: Essays in Literature and Learning,  
 London.
- Vaihinger, Hans  
 1924 The Philosophy of "As If": A System of the Theoretical,  
 Practical and Religious Fictions of Mankind, trans. C.K.  
 Ogden London: RKP.
- Veysey, L.  
 1965 The Emergence of the American University, Chicago:  
 Chicago Univ. Press.
- Wallace, Karl R.  
 1943 Francis Bacon on Communication and Rhetoric, Chapel  
 Hill: Univ. of N. Carolina Press.
- Warnock, Mary  
 1976 Imagination, London: Faber & Faber.
- Werhane, P. H.  
 1984 Philosophical Issues in Art, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Wheeler, S. C. III  
 1986 "The Extension of Deconstruction," The Monist, 69,1:3-21.
- Wheelwright, Philip  
 1966 The Presocratics (ed.), N.Y.: Odyssey.
- White, Hayden  
 1986 Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism, Balti-  
 more: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press.
- Wittgenstein, L.  
 1971 Philosophische Untersuchungen, Frankfurt: Surkamp.  
 1976 Philosophical Investigations, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.  
 1980 Culture and Value, (ed.) G. H. von Wright, with H.  
 Nyman, (trans.) P. Winch, Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press.
- Wollheim, Richard  
 1968 Art and Its Objects, Middlesex: Penguin.
- Wood and Bernasconi (eds.)

1985 Derrida and Differance, Parousia Press.